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Anime & Manga Monthly

ANIMERICA

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Anime Feature
"Bubble, Bubble, Genom
Means Trouble"

THE WORLD OF BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

Exclusive! The ANIMERICA Interview
BGC Creator Toshimichi Suzuki

Manga Features
MERMAID FOREST by Rumiko Takahashi

AD POLICE by Tony Takezaki

Odin

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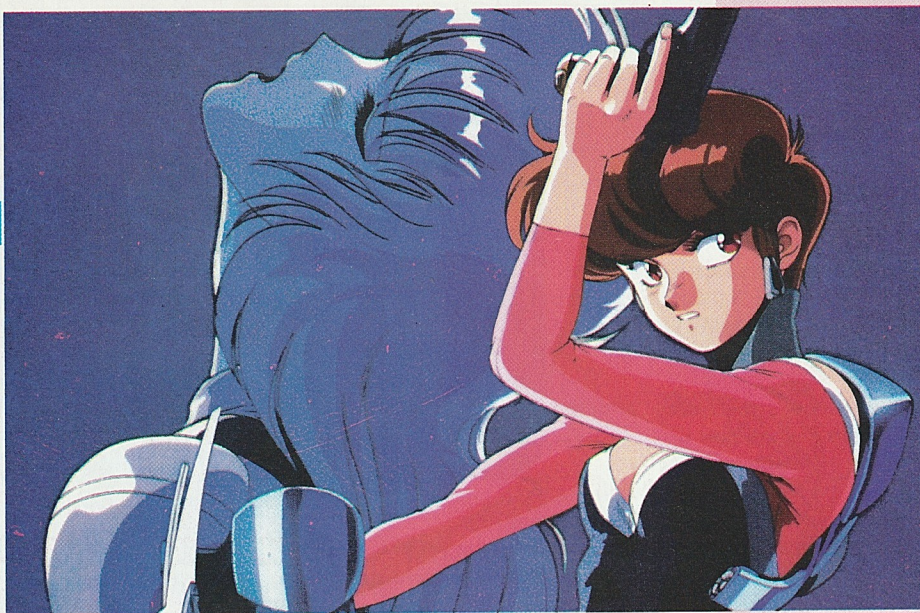
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Odin's creator, *Yoshinobu Nishizaki*, was the mind behind Japan's famous *Space Battleship Yamato* saga, well-known to American fans as *Starblazers*. Now, *Odin* carries *Nishizaki's* penchant for rich space-opera into new territory with some of the most dazzling theatrical animation ever seen. *Yamato* helped bring Japanese animation to American consciousness...now *Odin* takes it a step farther!





FEATURE ARTICLE

Bubble, Bubble, Genom Means Trouble

It's no secret that North Carolina-based AnimEigo's *Bubblegum Crisis* OAV series is one of the most popular English-language anime releases ever. The eagerness with which AnimEigo's subtitled release was greeted in the U.S. can be described as nothing less than phenomenal. *BGC* aficionado **Albert Sze-Wei Wang** overviews the bestselling series.

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★Toshimichi Suzuki

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FROM THE EDITOR

Are There NO Women in Anime...?

Is it a coincidence, do you think, that so many anime and manga fans are also interested in other areas of that nebulous collective we call "fandom"? Science fiction, comic books, historical re-enactment groups, role-playing games, computer bulletin board systems...when it comes to fandom, no fan is an island.

I've been active in all of these areas for nearly twelve years now. With the single exception of The Society for Creative Anachronism, a non-profit historical recreation organization, I've been intrigued by a conspicuous lack of female fans. In the SCA, men's costumes are every bit as sumptuously well-crafted as the women's, and women fighters are as likely to bring you to your knees as any man.

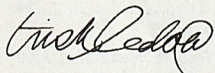
But where does that leave the rest of fandom? For every Ursula K. LeGuin and Nancy Kress, there are scores of male science fiction authors. For every Trina Robbins and Cat Yronwode in comics, there's a gaggle of male Jim Lee imitators (*what would the collective noun be, anyway? Oh, I know—a speedline! A speedline of Jim Lee imitators*). For every Helen McCarthy at ANIME UK magazine, there's a Robert Fenelon at ANIMEZINE, a Vaughan Simmons at MANGAJIN, a Mark Vezina at MECHA PRESS, a Claude Pelletier at PROTOCOLCULTURE ADDICTS....

Is there something about animation and manga peculiar to male fans? There's no reason why it should be. Rumiko Takahashi said in the last issue of ANIMERICA that female fans of *Ranma 1/2* outnumber male fans. Takahashi herself is a prime example of distaff power in the manga marketplace. According to some estimates, *shojo* or girls' manga makes up nearly 30% of the entire market. When you figure in the other genres *shojo* is competing with (sports, cooking and mah jongg, to name a few), that 30% becomes significant indeed. If women have found their niche in the Japanese anime and manga market, why haven't their American counterparts?

That's why I'm sending out the call for female readers. I know you're out there—stand up and be counted! Over the next few issues I'd like to focus on female fans of anime and manga. Why not drop me a line noting how you first became interested, how long you've been a fan, what are your favorite shows and who you think is the sexiest male anime or manga character of all time. Anyone who's been into anime for any length of time already *knows* who I'm voting for, but I want to hear from the rest of you!

ANIMERICA needs women! That's the message I want to focus on over the next few months. If you're a fan of animation or manga who also happens to be of the female persuasion, send your letters c/o "Letters to the Editor" at the usual address. We'll print our favorites in an upcoming issue. Who knows? Maybe we're not a minority after all. Maybe we're just...modest?

Nah.



Trish Ledoux
Editor

Last March, I asked all of you to find a copy of *Macross II, Volume Two* and let me know what you thought of my performance as the rather dingy idol singer, Wendy Ryder. Keep sending those ballots in! In order to give everyone a chance to reply, we've decided to publish the tallies next month, in our June issue. So what are you waiting for? Get out your crayons and VOTE! (And while you're at it, go check out the theatrical version of *Macross II*, now playing in a theater near you. If I can't have the fortune, at least I can have the fame, right?) See you in thirty.



ANIMERICA

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Mermaid Forest

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Contributors



Bubblegum Crisis aficionado **Albert Sze-Wei Wang** tackles the daunting series in this month's Anime Feature. Albert is a recent graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, where he majored in mechanical engineering and minored in suffering for the cause of anime (you're just good for 'em, Albert). He awaits your well-deserved sympathy on Internet via lazarus@quack.kfu.com. Albert is a frequent contributor to ANIMAG, The Magazine of Japanese Animation.



Translator and shojo manga scholar **Matt Thorn** ("Manga Close-Up") has worked with Viz for a very long time. His many projects include Sanctuary, Horobi, 2001 Nights, Ranma 1/2, Mermaid Forest and soon, Maison Ikkoku. He began working on his Ph.D. in anthropology two years ago at Columbia University, and is currently writing a thesis on Japanese women's comics. Why not drop him a line and let him know how much you appreciate his work?



Eugene Lee is a student at Texas A & M University, where he spends far too little time studying and far too much time playing video games. As ANIMERICA's own "AV Interface" reviewer, Eugene devotes his days to finding the best games for the money so we don't have to. He is a frequent denizen of Internet's infamous rec.arts.anime, where he can be contacted via lee@rigel.tamu.edu.



As assistant editor of the San Francisco Bay Area-based anime and manga newsletter V-MAX, anime iconoclast **Chris Keller** brings years of experience to his role as compact disc reviewer in ANIMERICA's own "The Compact View." Also known as "Mr. Warmth," Chris is well-known in the anime and manga community for hosting the anything-goes convention game show "Anime Remote Control," which will hopefully return for this year's Anime Expo.

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It's a cyberpunk pastiche set to a pop beat! It's the series that put AnimEigo on the map! It's chewing gum for anime eyes! It's Toshimichi Suzuki's...

Bubblegum Crisis



In answer to the devotion of American fans to the perennially popular, rock 'n' roll, crash 'n' crunch, head-hammering, song-singing, boomer-bashing world of *Bubblegum Crisis*...

ANIMERICA dispatches Executive Editor Seiji Horibuchi across the Big Water to interview Toshimichi Suzuki, creator of the *Knight Sabers* and head honcho of Artmic, groundbreaking independent design studio and leader of the OAV revolution in Japan; *BGC* aficionado Albert Sze-Wei Wang overviews the bestselling series in "Bubble, Bubble, Genom Means Trouble"; American *dojinshi* "Ranma in America" editor Chris Swett profiles the North Carolina-based AnimEigo in the debut of our new feature, Anime Q & A; Takayuki Karahashi listens to "Voices of Bubblegum Pop," a behind-the-scenes look at the popular voice actors; and finally, for those in need of a little memory refreshment, we give you "Tiny Bubbles," micro-synopses and staff information on the complete *Bubblegum Crisis* and *Crash* series.

Enjoy!

Bubble, Bubble, Genom Means Trouble

The creator of *Bubblegum Crisis* talks about machines of the future, social reform, Japan's cultural level and the state of the OAV industry. By Seiji Horibuchi

It's no secret that North Carolina-based AnimEigo's *Bubblegum Crisis* OAV series is one of the most popular English-language anime releases ever. The eagerness with which AnimEigo's subtitled release was greeted in the U.S. can be described as nothing less than phenomenal. Lead character and *Blade Runner* doppelgänger Priss even made it into ANIMERICA's "Top Three Favorite Anime Characters" poll conducted in March.

At first, *Bubblegum Crisis* creator Toshimichi Suzuki had wanted to remake *Technopolice 21C* (a movie done in 1982 by Toho) using his current staff and new talent. A chance meeting with Junji Fujita of Youmex during the *Iczer-One* wrap-up party led to an exchange of ideas and the two decided to make *Bubblegum Crisis*. The stories were written to express the fear that rapid technological innovations will make people apathetic as to how these new innovations could be used.

Utilizing the distinctive talents of Kenichi Sonoda, character designs for the female leads are attractive, tough and sexy. Mechanical designer Masami Obari's energetic design style applies perfectly to the team's eternally monstrous menaces, the bioengineered boomers. Its visual look reflects a sci-fi fantasy world where futuristic, decaying cities populated with stylish characters abound with slick design elements.

Another part of *BGC*'s recipe for success is the hard-driving score of original rock music created for each episode. Thanks to the distinctive voice talents of Kinuko Omori—singer of most of the series' popular songs and original voice actor for the character Priss—the music for the show is nearly as popular, if not more so, than the series itself.

"The genesis of the team isn't portrayed in the story itself," comments Suzuki, "so we created it for *Hurricane Live* to set the mood, and then threw in the 'head-banging' band visuals." The 25-minute video was released through Artmic in April, 1988; its sequel, *Hurricane Live 2033*, was released in June, 1990.

Perhaps it simply is the winning combination of science fiction, team action, police drama, monster menace and pretty girls that makes it such a familiar part of the American anime landscape. Anyway you look at it, *Bubblegum Crisis* is a more than modest achievement for an independent design company such as Artmic, a tiny firm that started out as nothing more than a gleam in the eye of an ambitious young group of designers.

"We wanted a place where we could indulge our imaginations," Suzuki says, "animation or movies, anything would have been fine. But what could have cost millions in a special-effects movie, we could do in animation. So we put out the animation... but the basic spirit is still self-indulgence."

The sequel, *Bubblegum Crash*, altered the personalities of the vigilante team, and thus the tone of the series. Priss had lost most of her streetwise edge while the personable Linna became a stock broker; Sylia's calculating hardness and resourcefulness were downplayed as Nene became aggressive, confident and competitive. Not all the changes received the fan stamp of approval, however, and although popular, *Bubblegum Crash* is considered less classic by many American fans of the original series.

Why is this series so popular? Perhaps it's the straightforwardness of the action, or the familiar cyberpunk feel of the story. You don't have to be Japanese to like science fiction, fast-fighting action, rock music or good-lookin' gals. *Bubblegum Crisis* reaches across cultural borders easily.

"Right now, the U.S. is in its infancy regarding original animated videos," Suzuki says. "Only those who see it as a novelty and those wanting to understand it more deeply by asking more questions are supporting it. We feel that we have a very strong obligation to respond in earnest to questions from our American fans." Suzuki smiles.

"After all, they could become our new core market."

—Albert Sze-Wei Wang

ANIMERICA: *Bubblegum Crisis* is one of the most popular animated series among American animation fans. I'd like to ask how the idea for it came about. What actually inspired the story?

Suzuki: When I was thirty, before I'd actually started on *Bubblegum Crisis*, I left Tatsunoko Productions to start an independent company. The first project we worked on was called *Technopolice*, a "mobile police" story where hazardous jobs in the organization would be left to robots. The idea was to foster a partnership between man and machine, a kind of team spirit.

ANIMERICA: Like *Patlabor*?

Suzuki: Right. And remember that *Technopolice* was made thirteen years earlier. I'd worked on this project for a long time, and when it was finally released through Toho, I kept my basic theme along the lines of how future society would reflect the relationship between man and machine. A future prediction story—that's what I wanted to do. What sort of contributions could man make to Earth in the midst of pollution and environmental destruction? How would civilized society interact with machines? These were the sort of issues I wanted to address.

ANIMERICA: So *Bubblegum Crisis* is really a natural extension of *Technopolice*.

Suzuki: Yes. *BGC* is set in Tokyo, but it could really be anywhere. It's set in the near future, 38 to 50 years from now, a time when humanity will have more progressive values but also greater pressures. This is where I wanted to keep the focus, while at the same time introducing the Knight Sabers as a personification of the strain of this new society. The story would be told from their perspective; they would act as "shadow assassins" seeking to resolve those pressures.

ANIMERICA: What exactly is your role in *Bubblegum Crisis*? Are you merely the producer, or do you plan the entire story? Are there other writers involved?

Suzuki: I oversee the production. We use our people for the script, and sometimes I write it myself. We put together a staff which will best suit the concept and then give them direction, occasionally providing guidelines. Right now I'm working on

a novel titled *Paradise Lost*, a story which takes place after the eleventh video, so my time is pretty limited these days. Sometimes this affects the decision on who will write the script.

ANIMERICA: Will this be part of *Bubblegum Crisis*? The next sequel, perhaps?

Suzuki: No, the novel is a separate project. The subtitle for *Paradise Lost* could be anything...*Crisis*, *Crash*, whatever. As I'm sure you're aware, we originally named the series "bubblegum" to reflect a world in crisis, like a chewing-gum bubble that's about to burst. Before the next *BGC* sequel is released, *Paradise Lost* will be published, and the new story will proceed from there.

ANIMERICA: While other animation companies tend to work with pre-existing characters, Artmic creates an original work and an original world. What's the reason behind that?

Suzuki: Basically, Artmic started out as a design company. We don't really think of ourselves as an animation production house; Artmic is more a place where we can utilize our designs and stories. We're not interested in production work. In planning, we control the script all the way from the storyboard to production. The rest—is done in concert with various production companies. This may be completely different from how it's done in other companies, but it's how we choose to work.

ANIMERICA: When you're planning a project, what kind of ideas do you have in mind?

Suzuki: When told in an organized story, our work is very multifaceted. Let's say it's fifty years in the future. We've made it out to space, the evolved machine has become pseudo-human, the cyborg becomes a boomer. Suppose that among the ranks of the machines, an anti-lifeform emerges. In the world of *Bubblegum Crisis*, of course, there's still some control over the machines, but give them some time...they may begin their revenge against mankind.

ANIMERICA: Just like in *AD Police*....

Suzuki: Yes.

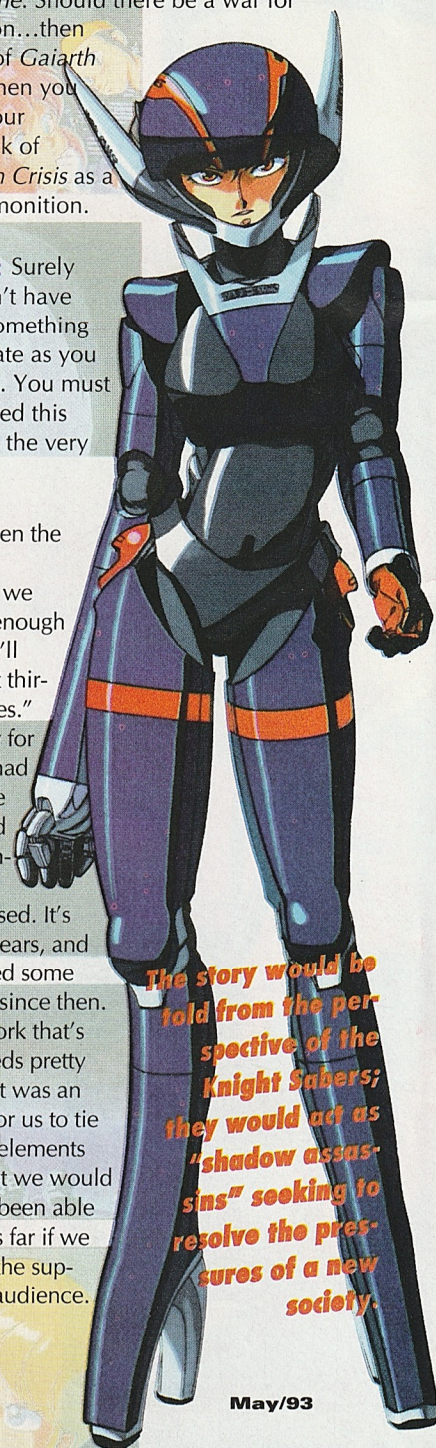
ANIMERICA: So there is a connection. How do the various series tie together?

Suzuki: When humanity is finally overcome, we've entered the world of *Gall Force*. We're talking about a place where machines are self-aware and actively weeding out humans. They take over Earth and evolve a little further...voilà! You've got Paranoids and Solnoids. They've split into a kind of humanity single-mindedly adapted to space on the one side and a machine army that's come to rule Earth on the other. Surpass that, and you've ventured onto the road that leads to *Megazone*. Should there be a war for some reason...then the world of *Gaiarth* is born. When you chronicle our works, think of *Bubblegum Crisis* as a sort of premonition.

ANIMERICA: Surely you couldn't have made up something this elaborate as you went along. You must have planned this world from the very beginning.

Suzuki: When the series was announced we were bold enough to say, "We'll make about thirteen volumes." It was lucky for us that we had an audience that allowed us to accomplish what we'd promised. It's been nine years, and we've gained some confidence since then. *BGC* is a work that's met our needs pretty well. Sure, it was an easy thing for us to tie the various elements together, but we would never have been able to come this far if we hadn't had the support of our audience.

The story would be told from the perspective of the Knight Sabers; they would act as "shadow assassins" seeking to resolve the pressures of a new society.



ANIMERICA: Why do you think *Bubblegum Crisis* is so popular?

Suzuki: Honestly? We never thought about it.

ANIMERICA: But really, don't you think your fans focus on the story? Or do you think they're just attracted by the look of the show...?

Suzuki: Both, I think. The truly devoted fans are always watching it with their sharp eyes, coming to me later wanting me to solve the mysteries, asking me questions such as "Are Mason and Sylia human, or are they boomers?" I could answer them, but I usually evade the issue by telling them I don't know myself. There are so many different things I want to focus on in the show. I want to sound a warning against a possibly chaotic future world, and yet I also want to give the fans some straightforward "boomers vs. Knight Sabers" action. Of our fans I think there are two types, those who see the vigilante action and become enamored with the superficial side of the story, and those who dig deeper and analyze *why* things are the way they are.

ANIMERICA: When you speak like that, it sounds as if there's no cultural barrier at all.

Suzuki: I don't think there is. We present the setting as Japan, but you know we intentionally nicknamed it "Tinsel City." It's just a city of pretense. It could be New York, London, anywhere.

ANIMERICA: It's international.

Suzuki: Yes. Of course, fifty years from now, it'll be a world mixed with various races. When you see all these Leons and

Prisses, the foreigners in public agencies and names like "Carson" popping up in the Japanese government, you should be aware that it's intentional. There's some nationalism left in the world, but mostly it's giant corporations. In my book, the corporations walk the Earth as if it were their own. We have multinational corporations in the world now, and these supranational attitudes are gradually taking it over. In theory they may be talking about the Japanese or the Americans but really, that era has vanished. We're becoming a world where the corporations have the power.

ANIMERICA: When is the *Paradise Lost* novel coming out?

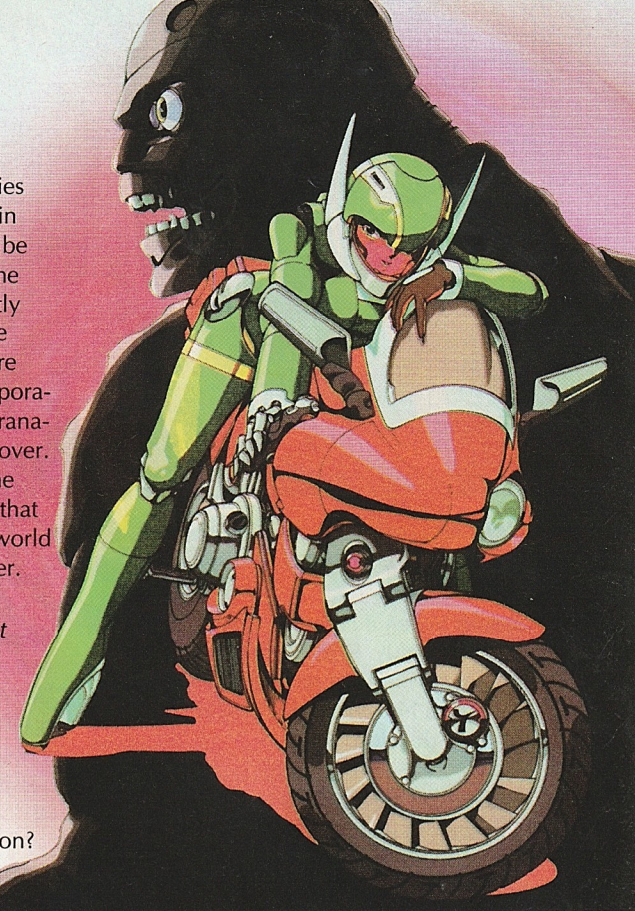
Suzuki: Actually, the first volume is out already. From Bandai.

ANIMERICA: Does it relate to the *Bubblegum Crisis* world or its extension?

Suzuki: It starts a few months after the current eleventh episode. I think it'll end up as a two-volume project.

ANIMERICA: I take it there'll be animation based on it, as well?

Suzuki: Rather than being based on it, the animation version of *Paradise Lost* begins right where the second volume ends. We have the storyboard for two episodes done now. Step by step, the whole picture is emerging from the story. We've already established that there's a space colony in this world. In fifty years, new people will arrive; they'll have to use drugs to adapt to space. These drugs will produce enhanced humans—"boosts," we call them. And then powerful combat soldiers who fight on par with boomers will start appearing. Then space-combat boomers. When that happens, you'll begin to realize how very



big the world of *Bubblegum Crisis* is.

ANIMERICA: As you know, *AD Police* is being serialized in this magazine. What are your views on the series?

Suzuki: *AD Police* is the story of a specialized task force, independent from the normal police, set up to combat boomers and cyborgs. Top officers such as Leon are recruited from troops much like the riot police, hand-picked to create an "advanced police force," if you will, to combat specialized crime. Their division has just been formed, so we set the story a little earlier than the first episode of *Bubblegum Crisis*. And then there's the Knight Sabers...their existence is just hinted at in the manga. Tony Takezaki's already gotten them involved, but the story still feels as though it's set a little bit prior to *BGC*.

There's some nationalism left in the world, but mostly it's giant corporations, who walk the Earth as if it were their own.





We present the setting of BGC as Japan, but you know we intentionally nicknamed it "Tinsel City." It's just a city of pretense. It could be New York, London, anywhere.

ANIMERICA: What do you think of Tony Takezaki's comics?

Suzuki: When it comes to imagination, we rate him highly. We're working together on *Genocyber* right now, so we'd like to make sure his style gets all the room it needs to develop.

ANIMERICA: Let's talk about *Genocyber*. Was the original idea for this yours?

Suzuki: Basically, one of our staff thought it up and then I fleshed it out on my own. Tony created the manga version based on that. For the animation we developed it even further, to create a different atmosphere.

ANIMERICA: Is this a new idea, different from the *Bubblegum Crisis* storyline?

Suzuki: It's a story that was thought up about six or seven years ago when we were talking with Bandai about making live-action material for the U.S. We never really intended *Genocyber* as a project to be animated. But there were structural reorganizations going on for Bandai at the time, and the idea was shelved. As for myself, I thought it was an interesting idea

It should come as no surprise that the OAV industry is closely linked to the companies who produce the hardware.



so I wanted to do it. I even considered becoming a producer at Apollon in order to do it, but then Apollon and Bandai merged, so now we're working with Bandai again.

ANIMERICA: So *Genocyber* will be animated after all. When?

Suzuki: The first volume will be done very soon now. The second one will be done sometime this fall.

Animerica: How many volumes will it be?

Suzuki: I think it'll be four thirty-minute volumes after the initial 45-minute volume. We're also going with live-action and visual effects. It won't be just animation; we're going to use video processing to put on the effects, then build models for the live-action portion to give it a realistic effect.

ANIMERICA: Have you done this sort of thing before?

Suzuki: No, never. It's so tedious. But our camera crew sometimes experiments with ideas that might provide a little realism, to get something a little different from animation's depth. And it's our habit to implement new ideas during a new production.

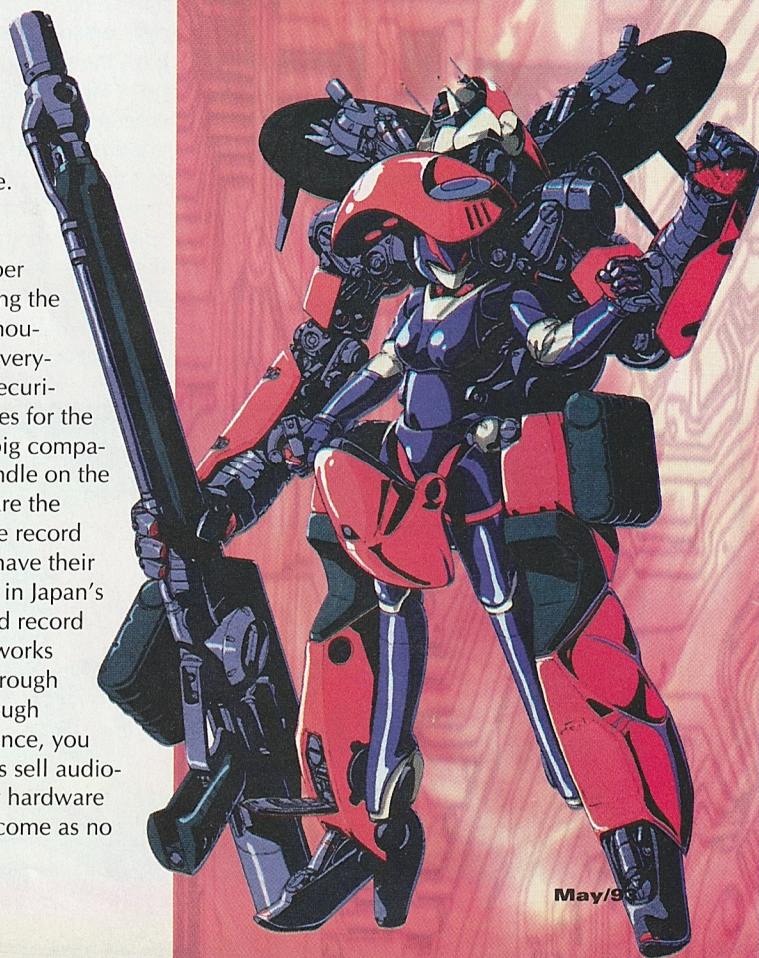
ANIMERICA: What's the situation like in the OAV industry these days?

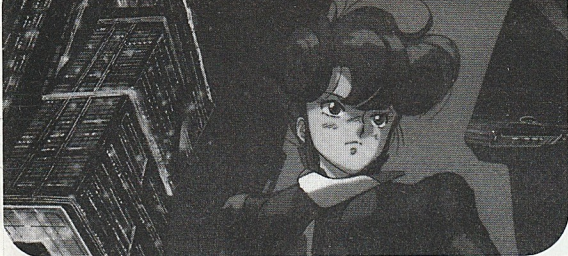
Suzuki: The present situation is really a difficult one. Corporations are talking about the recession now. Japan lost sight of the proper way to look at values during the pre-recession days of the nouveau riche. This goes for everything, from real estate to securities. And naturally, this goes for the OAV market as well. The big companies who *really* have a handle on the OAV industry these days are the record companies. And the record companies are *big*—they have their distribution systems based in Japan's mass-market appliance and record chainstores. Toshiba EMI works through Toshiba. Victor through Matsushita. Columbia through Hitachi. That's their insurance, you see—the parent companies sell audio-visual appliances. It's their hardware strategy as well. It should come as no

surprise that the OAV industry is closely linked to the companies who produce the hardware. But when a recession like this comes along, money that would normally be cycled from hardware sales to software development becomes very tight indeed.

ANIMERICA: So what do you think is the cause of this decrease in product? Is it much harder to create an original work now?

Suzuki: Well, a few years ago, original videos were being made at a breakneck pace. But now, because the audio-visual hardware isn't selling, the software industry and everything else has stagnated. Businesses are playing "wait and see," and OAV sales are very subdued. When I say times are difficult, it means there's a drought of sponsors. When it comes to releasing OAVs, sponsors won't take a chance on anything they can't get solid statistics on, such as how many related manga or books have been sold. For people who make original stories like us, there's no choice but to do it on our own. There was a time when videos sold in the tens of thousands; for example, the first *Megazone* sold 100,000 copies. The so-called "OAV boom" grew directly from that era. But for now, it's a really tight situation, and a sale of 10,000 copies is considered to be a hit.





ANIMERICA: How do you cope?

Suzuki: We don't really worry about the times, since we subscribe to the long-term view that people will eventually come around to watch videos of good quality. Production companies that take on subcontracts are under pressure when the sponsor makes the budget very tight. But even with small budgets, there's plenty of quality product to be found. You won't be seeing any volume increases for now, though.

ANIMERICA: Now that there are English versions of your work readily available, what might be your view toward the U.S.? Why do you think your work is so popular with American fans?

Suzuki: Really, the American situation is just like Japan twenty years ago, when we were buying American comics. Those comics had a lot of novelty; they opened up doors. Tens of thousands of people would check out a place selling American comics or American information. In those days, people who looked at Japanese culture and saw something lacking felt an opening of the spirits, a widening of their cultural horizons.

ANIMERICA: But what about the U.S. market?

Suzuki: Regardless of where you live, there's a certain age when you cut off your ties with cartoons, wouldn't you agree? Japan is the kind of place where even adults read *Weekly Shonen Jump* and whatnot. There's no shortage of these childlike adults there. But in the U.S. and in other countries, people stop watching animation after a certain point. There's just no more animation worth their time to see. Maybe this is why Japanese OAVs are getting such attention.

ANIMERICA: What do you think is the best way to promote your work in the U.S.?

Suzuki: Well, our hope is that a work such as *Bubblegum Crisis* can be introduced to the mainstream through pay or cable TV, where we can catch the eyes of 50,000 or 100,000 or even 200,000 people. In Japan, because copyright is divided into several companies, there's a certain

degree of difficulty in bringing it to other countries in a coordinated fashion. At least with OAVs, we can work on something long enough so that it fits the framework of TV. In fact, if there was anyone in the U.S. willing to work with us, we'd love to do an American version of *Genocyber* or *Bubblegum Crisis*.

ANIMERICA: What about Japan? Do you have plans to introduce your work into the Japanese mainstream?

Suzuki: Japan as a nation has a population of 120 million, but even here our business is aimed toward hardcore fans only. We're selling a specialized product that isn't really a part of the mainstream. It's a *Catch-22*, really—although our market is located in the unique, concentrated and insulated world of anime enthusiasts, it also creates a formidable wall that sales and promotions can't overcome. It's all such a small world...we laugh about it sometimes, how the Great Toshiba and the Great Polydor and the Great Sony are creating entire departments within their gigantic corporations to sell product to maybe 10,000 people.

ANIMERICA: What about Artmic? Would 10,000 people be a large enough market?

Suzuki: Sure, selling in America is something Artmic could do, if we made up our minds to do it. For a market of no more than 10,000 anime merchandise-buying customers, even a small store would suffice. From a marketing point of view, though, the hobbyist quotient is just too high. It sometimes makes me wonder about the cultural maturity of the Japanese. Think of it this way. With Americans, you often hear about something called "million-sellers." There's nothing like that with the Japanese. Even with something as big as *Terminator* or *Star Wars*, the first Japanese release would probably be limited to no more than 100,000 copies. In the U.S., you'd have to start from a million. You have to wonder where the difference comes from, when there's only twice

as many people in the U.S. compared to Japan. We're just beginning to understand that judging sales in urban areas like Los Angeles can't be projected to the entire nation. What's coming out in Tokyo may well reflect sales all over Japan, but it's not necessarily true of America.

ANIMERICA: In closing, is there anything you'd like to say to your fans in the U.S.?

Suzuki: *Bubblegum Crisis* is something my company and I have a lot invested in, and we'd like to continue developing it. I'm not talking about lofty social reform per se; I'm talking about sounding a tocsin for the future—what needs to be done in order to survive, what meaning the choices we make now have on our future. Are we as a species are on the right track? That's something we'd like you to consider. If you can enjoy the drama for what it is, that's great. But if you could spare a moment to think about the issues we're trying to address...well, then we've accomplished something. ★



Debut of a New Feature! Anime Q & A

Although it's usually the artists who get all the glory, there could be no anime or manga if there wasn't a dedicated corps of people working behind the scenes to produce our favorite pastime. **Anime Q & A** brings you mini-interviews with the industry professionals who make it all possible.

AnimEigo + Bubblegum Crisis: It's As Easy As ABC

Of the many anime titles imported to the United States, *Bubblegum Crisis* is among the most popular. The crew at AnimEigo recognized the original animation video series as a prime property on sight. Here are some of their comments. By **Chris Swett**

RW = Robert Woodhead, President
RA = Roe Adams III, Vice-President
MH = Michael House, Technical Director
JH = Janice Hindle, Production Manager

Q: What led you to choose *Bubblegum Crisis* as a series to subtitle and import into the U.S.? Was it the popularity of the science fiction genre?

A: [RW] *BGC* was the best of the OAV boom-era SF series. It was the best-known to the fans in the States, and we felt it had good mainstream potential. So for these reasons, it was on our "A" list of desired titles from day one.

Q: Are you a science fiction fan? Is *BGC* the kind of video series you would have purchased for yourself?

A: [RA] Am I ever! I've been collecting science fiction since 1954, and now have over 24,000 books. As to the second question, that's why we have the series today! We only carry titles we would want to own ourselves. AnimEigo's philosophy from the very start has been to bring over the best available titles to share with the American fans, and to build awareness of the wondrous nature of Japanese anime throughout the United States.

A: [JH] As someone who had never been exposed to the genre I was skeptical at first, but it's grown on me. I feel very familiar with the characters now. I appreciate the artistic ability of the artists and the lively imaginations of the series creators, and I do understand why there are so many stalwart fans. Personally, I like the cels and setups. Our office is festooned with them, naturally.

Q: Why did you choose to do the entire *BGC* series and the music videos? Was it a desire to be complete?

A: [RW] We always intended to do the entire *BGC* OAV series, but the idea to do the two music videos with animation (*Hurricane Live 2032* and *2033*) came later. The rationale was to bring them out at a very low price point (\$19.95), and use them as a marketing tool to attract new viewers to *BGC* and anime, and also help get *BGC* into more mainstream video stores. It's been a very successful strategy.

Q: Did subtitling *BGC* pose any unique challenges?

A: [RW] Many, especially in the technical area. We redesigned our software to handle multiple asynchronous titles and colors, as well as improve the synchronization of the titles. We had to deal with songs for the first time as well. Neither *Riding Bean* nor *Madox* had Japanese-language songs in them. Also, as it was our first series, we had to develop ways of being consistent in our "voicing" of the characters. The largest problem was gear-

ing up from being a company that did one tape a year to one tape a month (and now, two or three!) and still maintain our quality standards.

Q: Did you work from original scripts?

A: [MH] Yes, in conjunction with the finished video. Translation by ear, i.e., with only video to work with, is a pain, and is much more error-prone than in combination with the original scripts. It's standard operating procedure on all our works, starting with *Madox-01*. In cases where the script differs from the finished video (it does happen), the video takes precedence.

Q: Did you interact with Artmic president Toshimichi Suzuki or any of the original production team to resolve translation or other problems?

A: [RW] Yes. A classic example of this was the resolution of the Largo/Ralgo debate. Mr. Suzuki had never given it much thought until we asked, but decided he liked "Largo" better. We also wondered why the Knight Sabers' beam weapon hit Largo's satellite before Largo's beam hit them, even though Largo's beam fired first. The answer was that the Knight Sabers' beam was a laser, but Largo's was a particle-beam, a slightly slower-than-light weapon. Plus, they were kind enough to help us make sure our name translations in the credits were accurate.

Q: How is *BGC* selling, generally speaking? What made you decide to reissue the series on laser disc?

A: [JH] The *Bubblegum Crisis* series has sold very well and continues to be a big part of our business. We often get calls from people new to the anime field, who have sometimes just stumbled upon the series by chance, and they are so enthusiastic and excited that this type of animation exists. The main reason for deciding to reissue the old series on laser disc, and to re-do the masters, especially the early ones on D2 digital, was because of customer requests. AnimEigo has always tried to be as responsive as possible to the fans. We have always requested, and if possible implemented, their suggestions.

Q: It's my understanding that *BGC* is available in PAL format. Is this true? In what countries?

A: [JH] The *Crisis* series and *Riding Bean* are being released in the United Kingdom in PAL format. It is doing very well over there. We direct calls regarding the PAL format from Australia, Europe, etc. to our agent there. Anyone who wants to know the address and telephone number only has to call, write or e-mail us.

The author would like to give special thanks to everyone at AnimEigo for their assistance.

Tiny texts as short and sweet as Priss' concert skirt!

Tiny Bubbles

Kind of like a pocket guide to the *Bubblegum Crisis* and *Crash* series created by Toshimichi Suzuki, only larger.
By Albert Sze-Wei Wang

BUBBLEGUM CRASH

Bubblegum Crash 1: Illegal Army

Release Date: 5/25/91
Screenplay by Emu Arit; Direction by Hiroshi Ishiodori



The Knight Sabers and the AD Police battle a platoon of highly sophisticated power-suit clad thieves. Features music by Takehito Nakazawa and a new voice for Priss, played by Ryoko Tachikawa.

Bubblegum Crash 2: Geo Climbers

Release Date: 7/25/91
Screenplay by Emu Arit; Directed by Hiroyuki Fukushima



Two surviving boomer development teams fight for ADAMA, a prototype boomer utilizing artificial intelligence software that would enable Boomers to reason. Features new music by Michihiko Ota.

Bubblegum Crash 3: Melt Down

Release Date: 12/21/91
Screenplay by Emu Arit; Directed by Hiroshi Ishiodori



The resolution of a three-part storyline reveals of the identity of the "Voice" and his goals. Features music by the popular Takehito Nakazawa.

Voices of Bubblegum Pop

Everyone loves the hard-edged look of the characters, of course, but it's the sound that initially attracts many fans to the Bubblegum Crisis series. Priss, Nene, Linna, Sylia...fasten your seatbelts as ANIMERICA goes behind the scenes to interview the four charismatic women who bring these characters to life. By Takayuki Karahashi



Kinuko Omori

Kinuko Omori plays "Priss," the loose cannon of the Knight Sabers. Born in Tokyo on May 27, 1967, Omori was still in high school when she first auditioned as a voice-actor in late 1986.

Priss was Omori's first voice-acting role. The petite actor says she wasn't really comfortable dubbing voices until *Bubblegum Crisis 3*. After Ryoko Tachikawa took on the role as of *BGC 8*, Omori became lead vocalist in the rock band "Silk" (from the first part of her name, *kinu* or "silk"), whose repertoire includes the opening song for the children's animated TV show *Raijin-Oh*.

"In the beginning," she says, "I thought Priss was far more self-assured and confident than I was." Surrounded by seasoned professionals, Omori says she was "scared to death" when she first walked into the recording studio but that her experience as a singer helped her to look more confident than she really was.

Since Omori has had experience as a lead vocalist both on and off screen, her on-screen and true-life personae really started to synchronize by the time of *Bubblegum Crisis 3* and 4. Coincidentally, Omori obtained her motorcycle license two weeks before she was offered the role. By the time Tachikawa succeeded her, Omori says she felt like a graduating high school senior passing on the torch to a junior member.



Akiko Hiramatsu

Akiko Hiramatsu plays "Nene Romanova," mascot of the Knight Sabers and officer in the AD Police. Born in Tokyo on August 31, 1967, Hiramatsu was also new to the scene as a voice-actor when she started *Bubblegum Crisis*.

Recalling those days, Hiramatsu says the toughest challenge was going on stage at local conventions. Although she was happy to be able to travel, eat good food for free and meet her fans, going on stage without a script was not meant for her. She says she often passed much of the burden on to Tomizawa ("Linna"), who Hiramatsu says is "far better at improvising."

Hiramatsu says it wasn't until they went on location to film *Holiday in Bali* that the cast became really close to each other. Before then, she first became friends with Omori and then with Sakakibara, but there was "some tension" with Tomizawa. A chance discussion of karma and reincarnation, however, lowered the barriers between them and cemented the bonds of their friendship. Hiramatsu says she's also a big fan of Silk.



Michie Tomizawa

Michie Tomizawa plays "Linna Yamazaki," the aerobics instructor-cum-financial analyst of the Knight Sabers who joined the group to avenge her parents. Born in Gunma on October 20, 1961, her other voice roles include "C-ko" in *Project A-Ko* and "Sailor Mars" in *Sailor Moon*.

Standing somewhere between the neophyte careers of Omori and the veteran Sakakibara, Tomizawa says she was fortunate to watch Omori grow as a voice-actor while relying on Sakakibara as though she were an older sister. Commenting on her colleagues, Tomizawa says Sakakibara is a highly educated yet mischievous person who can be calm and full of advice, yet prone to fits to nervousness before going on stage at a convention.

Omori, Tomizawa says, is exactly the cute type she'd like to have as a girlfriend if she were a man. Tomizawa is also a big fan of Silk. "Hiramatsu is like an charming child you let loose and then just sit back and watch," she says mirthfully.

"Perhaps every family should have one."



Yoshiko Sakakibara

Yoshiko Sakakibara plays "Sylia Stingray," the brain of the Knight Sabers and founder of the group. Born in Tokyo on May 13, 1956, Sakakibara has enjoyed a long career in the recording studio and is definitely the most mature and articulate of the four.

Sakakibara tends to be cast in strong and charismatic roles such as "Princess Kushana" in *Nausicaä*, "Captain Nagumo" in *Mobile Police Patlabor*, and "Karla the Grey Witch" in *Record of Lodoss Wars*. A long-cherished dream of her fans is to get their hands on a digitized recording of her voice saying "Wake up, you wimps!" to use as an especially motivating alarm clock.

Recalling her *Bubblegum Crisis* days, Sakakibara says it was a time of personal and professional change, a move from her late twenties into her thirties ("in other words, a slump" she says with grim amusement). Consequently, Sakakibara has strong memories of *BGC*, as well as memories of even stronger internal turmoil.

Of the Knight Sabers cast, Sakakibara says it's unusual for a troupe of women to get along as well as they did, especially with the occasional "prima donna" behavior they all had to endure from time to time. Of her fans, Sakakibara says rather than a mere "provider of fantasies," she'd like to become something more "inspirational," so that her presumably ne'er-do-well fans may become "better members of society." Ahem.

BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

Bubblegum Crisis

Release Date: 2/25/87
Written and Directed by Katsuhito Akiyama



Introduces the Knight Sabers and their fight with both the biotech "boomers" and the worldwide conglomerate Genom.

Bubblegum Crisis 2: Born to Kill

Release Date: 9/5/87
Written and Directed by Katsuhito Akiyama



Knight Saber Linna is driven to seek revenge against the elusive Genom for the death of a friend.

Bubblegum Crisis 3: Blow Up

Release Date: 12/5/87
Written and Directed by Katsuhito Akiyama



The final confrontation between Knight Sabers founder Sylia and Genom's enigmatic Mason.

Bubblegum Crisis 4: Revenge Road

Release Date: 7/24/88
Screenplay by Emu Arai; Directed by Hiroki Hayashi



An emotionally scarred man seeks revenge against a group of motorcycle "outriders" in a cybernetically augmented car.

Bubblegum Crisis 5: Moonlight Rambler

Release Date: 12/25/88
Screenplay by Toshimichi Suzuki; Directed by Masami Obari



The struggles of two escaped 3-3-S boomers and the tragic end of friendship as the Knight Sabers attempt to solve the mystery of "vampire-like" killings in the city.

Bubblegum Crisis 6: Red Eyes

Release Date: 8/30/89
Screenplay by Toshimichi Suzuki; Directed by Masami Obari



Ambitious and mysterious super-boomer Largo and his quest to be the redeemer of his "children." Features additional character designs (including Largo) by Hiroaki Goda.

Bubblegum Crisis 7: Double Vision

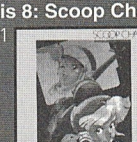
Release Date: 3/14/90
Screenplay by Toshimichi Suzuki; Directed by Fumihiko Takayama



Vision, a popular American singer, begins a quest of bitter revenge against Genom for the death of her younger sister Irene. Features chief animation direction and special character designs by Satoshi Urushibara.

Bubblegum Crisis 8: Scoop Chase

Release Date: 1/30/91
Screenplay by Hidetoshi Yoshida; Direction by Hiroaki Goda



Lisa Vanotte, an aspiring journalist, aims to uncover the identities of the Knight Sabers but becomes entangled in the plans of a brilliant but deranged expatriate Genom scientist.

SPECIAL FEATURE! New Spring Season Anime Close-Up

We interrupt your regularly scheduled news programming in order to bring you an in-depth look at some unusual animated features we thought you'd like. Enjoy!



Irresponsible Captain Tyler

Imagine the most lecherous, irresponsible man in the universe being placed in command of a starship. Despite staggering odds he somehow always manages to get through by the skin of his teeth. Who is this man? He's Tyler, the irresponsible captain, star of a new animated television series based on the bestselling novel series.

The year is 6999 S.C. (Space Calendar). Two interstellar powers—the Planetary Alliance, led by the Earth, and the Holy Raalgon Empire, led by its sixteen-year-old Empress—are on the brink of war. Against this not-unusual background is “Justy Ueki Tyler,” a not-unusual young man who decides to sign onto the short-handed Planetary Alliance. Of course, when it comes to Tyler, nothing is what it seems and trouble is only nanoseconds away.

In the first episode “The Mysterious Irresponsible Man,” Tyler spots a recruiting advertisement and makes the decision to join the Planetary Alliance Forces. Recently discouraged from climbing the corporate ladder of success, the twenty-year-old Tyler convinces himself

that the military isn't so bad after all. Unfortunately, “All I want is to advance in rank quickly without exerting myself” is *not* the answer the Alliance Forces recruiters want to hear and trouble soon breaks out.

Meanwhile, the fifteenth Emperor of the Raalgon Empire has died in a plot instigated by his military adviser, Wang. It seems the overzealous adviser is now working on convincing the new sixteen-year-old heir Empress Azalynn to declare war on the Earth and the Alliance. As the great wheels of his machinations turn, Tyler shows up for his recruitment interview and, with his own special flair, seduces the female-voiced AI computer which subsequently self-destructs. The Alliance takes it as a Raalgon plot and accepts Tyler without further testing.

In the second episode “Hey, Ho! The Pension Gravy-Train,” the newly recruited Tyler is assigned to the Pension Division and told to deliver funds to the retired and bedridden Vice-Admiral Hanner as his first duty. Unfortunately for Tyler (or fortunately, depending on how you look at it), a Raalgon agent has already taken the Vice-Admiral, his daughters and an Alliance officer named Captain Yuriko Star hostage and the irresponsible new recruit is caught squarely in the middle.

After being mistaken for a special forces agent, Tyler is sent in to rescue the hostages. Through a combination of unbelievable luck and irresponsibility, Tyler ends up rescuing the group and is promoted to the rank of captain. What a coincidence!

Currently airing on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. in the Tokyo area, the 26-episode *Irresponsible Captain Tyler* TV series is based on author Hitoshi Yoshioka's *The Galaxy's Most Irresponsible Man* series. Published by the Fujimi Fantasia Novels division of Fujimi Shobo, this nine-volume novel series and its accompanying four-volume companion stories have sold over a million copies in Japan.

Animation is by Tatsunoko, with production by the aptly named “Tyler Project”—Big West, King Record, VAP

and Media Ring. The dual Tyler TV/video project is unusual in that it's scheduled for national television broadcast as well as video release in thirteen VHS and LD volumes, each containing two television episodes plus otherwise unavailable “bonus” material each month.

According to the show's producer, there are fifty separate characters and nearly four hundred different types of mecha to be found throughout the series. Another unique aspect is that unlike most shows planned for broadcast, *Tyler* was animated before it found a TV station and was therefore free of sponsor-initiated influences.

Most sponsor-initiated influences, that is. Rumor has it that a shot of a nude woman in the ending credits removed after the fourth episode by network censors remains in all her uncovered glory in VHS and LD versions. Retailers, look out.

Move Over, Shonen! New OAVs Aimed At the Shoujo Generation Debut From Shueisha

In the world of OAVs, a good percentage of the stories are originally from manga series. And of the OAVs based on manga series, a majority of them are from shonen and seinen or boys' and young men's comic magazines.

In answer to the cries of *shoujo* manga fans wondering “Why don't they ever make any videos for me!?” publishing megalith Shueisha has announced that it will release six *shoujo* titles from its best-selling *Margaret* and *Margaret Extra* young girls' or *shoujo* manga magazines in an OAV format designed to appeal expressly to lovers of the genre.

The themes of all six videos will (naturally) center around love stories, with some adult themes as well as young adult dramas mixed in. Each volume will be approximately 30 minutes long and will feature production by Madhouse, already a fan favorite for their work on the for-women-only *Desperate Love 1989* (reviewed in last month's ANIMERICA). This “Margaret Video Series” will be released exclusively through Shueisha. Each monthly volume will retail for ¥3900.

Flower Rings for the Fashion Boy

SCHEDULED RELEASE DATE
4/23/93
ORIGINAL STORY BY
Noriko Atsumi



The story of a young girl in her second year of junior high school, Kotobuki Fujiya, and a 26-year-old boutique owner/designer, Hodaka Kunishige. A story about love overcoming age differences with a comedic touch.

Singles

SCHEDULED RELEASE DATE
5/28/93
ORIGINAL STORY BY
Mari Fujimura



Upon entering college, Saki Hanasaka decides to give up on her one-sided love affair with an older sister's boyfriend, Yo Kazami. Saki proves unable to forget and joins a club Yo belongs to, only to meet and become attracted to another new member, Daichi Tachibana. The three end up having to make a video together, forcing Saki to make a decision about her feelings for Yo and about Daichi's kindness toward her.

Pops

SCHEDULED RELEASE DATE
6/25/93
ORIGINAL STORY BY
Aya Ikuemi



Bittersweet love story about two high school students, Kusuko Harada and Takeshi Mishima, whose relationship must endure the mutual misunderstandings and peer pressure from their friends.

The Sleepless Oedo

SCHEDULED RELEASE DATE
7/23/93
ORIGINAL STORY BY
Keiko Honda



A tale set in the days of old Tokyo (Edo) concerning the courtesan Usugumo Tayuu [*lit.*, "courtesan," as it was common to be described by one's profession rather than surname—Ed.], the thief Kikunosuke, a brilliant doctor and the trio's adventures together.

Kiss Me on the Apple of My Eye

SCHEDULED RELEASE DATE
8/27/93
ORIGINAL STORY BY
Noriko Ueda



Teenager Ibuki Morisato dreams about her first kiss with a handsome young man, only to meet him the very next day in class as a new student. To add to her confusion the young man, Naoto Ebisu, happens to be staying with her family while his parents are called away overseas. And then, when the kiss actually happens between Naoto and Ibuki...

A-Girl

SCHEDULED RELEASE DATE
9/24/93
ORIGINAL STORY BY
Fusako Kuramochi



A complex love story between two sisters, Mariko and Mayuko Seno, a short-tempered boyfriend and Ichiro Natsume, a handsome but womanizing model. A gentle look into the complexities of relationships and the roles people are forced to play within in it.

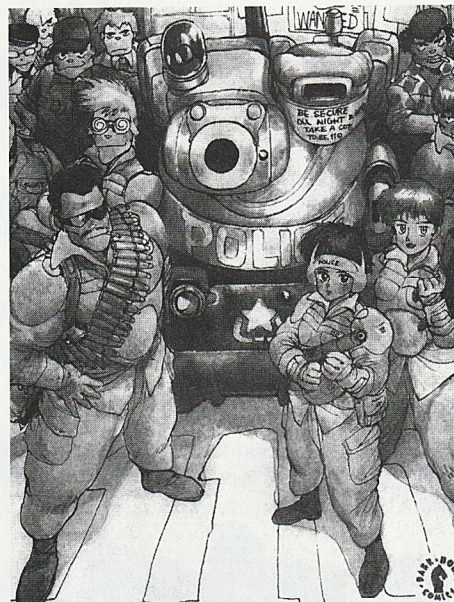
News You Can Use—Hot Off the Presses! HOT FLASHES

Kaoru Shintani, known to American manga fans as the author of the popular *Area 88*, debuts a new OAV series based on his comic of the same name, *Desert Rose*, "Revelations of Snow," currently running in Hakusensha's monthly manga magazine *Young Animal*.

Desert Rose is the story of an all-female anti-terrorist group called "C.A.T." The group is led by the title character, code-named "Marie of the Rose" after a bomb kills her husband and child during a terrorist attack and she is permanently marked with a rose-shaped scar.

The 50-minute video is scheduled for a late-April release and features production by J.C. Staff. Several staff members of Shintani's previ-

ous OAV, *Cleopatra D.C.*, return for *Desert Rose* including director Yasunao Aoki and character and art designer Minoru Yamasawa. Script is by Shintani himself.



The ever-popular adventures of über artist Masamune Shirow's bumbling Tank Police are back! First released in 1988, the four-volume *Dominion* OAV series was subsequently subtitled (and later dubbed) by the New York-based U.S. Manga Corps, where it has proved a consistent bestseller ever since.

Unlike previous volumes, Masamune is said to have taken an active role in the creation of the new

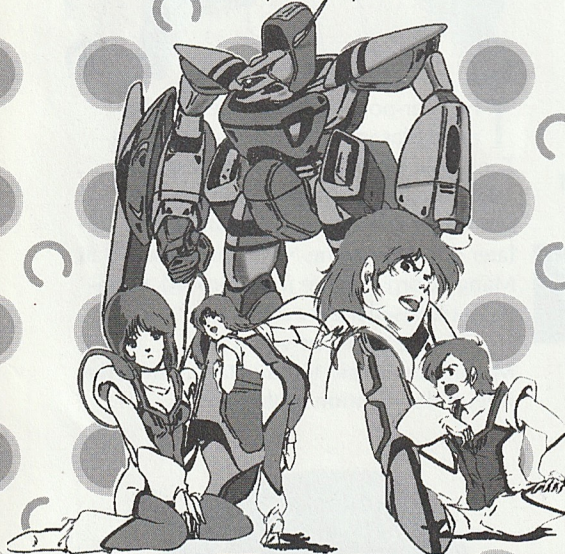


Dominion. Producers promise that each volume of the planned six-episode series will be a complete "story in itself." Production is by the busy J.C. Staff, with distribution by Bandai Visual.

Back when *Macross II* was first released, there were rumors that 1983's popular *Superdimensional Century Orguss* TV series might be continued. At last, it seems as though the rumors might be true after all.

Orguss II, as it's currently known, is scheduled to be released as a six-episode OAV series from Bandai Visual. Although the director for the upcoming series is said to have been chosen, details are still sketchy and the remainder of the staff is yet to be decided.

The first volume of the new *Orguss* is tentatively scheduled to be released before the end of the year. Look to ANIMERICA for more details as they develop. ☆



VIDEO CLIPS JAPAN'S TOP TEN

The Bestselling Animated Videos, Compiled by Original Confidence Research Company (During the Week 3/10/93 thru 4/9/93)

- 1 **Crimson Pig**
Tokuma Shoten • ¥12800
- 2 **Legend of Armored Dragon Villgust • Part One**
Bandai • ¥4800
- 3 **Cinderella** (Japanese-Dubbed Version)
Disney Home Video • ¥5600
- 4 **Lovely Soldier Sailor Moon 1**
Toei • ¥3100
- 5 **Cinderella** (English w/ Japanese Subtitles)
Disney Home Video • ¥5600
- 6 **Arslan War Chronicles II**
Sony Music Entertainment • ¥9800
- 7 **Secret of Molder**
Pioneer LDC • ¥666
- 8 **Wolf Guy • Volume Two**
Bandai • ¥4800
- 9 **Ys, "Citadel of the Heavens"**
Chapter One
Kadokawa, Others • ¥5800
- 10.. **New Century GPX Cyber Formula 11 • Volume Two**
VAP • ¥4800

WHAT THEY SAY THEY'RE WATCHING

The Top Ten Anime TV Shows in Japan Based on Anime Magazine Readers' Polls [from 1/11/93 thru 2/10/93]

- 1 **LOVELY SOLDIER Sailor Moon**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 2 **The Poltergeist Report**
Fuji TV • Saturdays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 3 **Dragon Ball Z**
Fuji TV • Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 4 **Irresponsible Captain Tyler**
Tokyo TV • Mondays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 5 **Miracle Girls**
Japan TV • Fridays @ 5:00 p.m.
- 6 **Crayon Shin-Chan**
TV Asahi • Mondays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 7 **Papua of the South Seas**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 8 **Mikan's Picture Diary**
TBS • Fridays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 9 **Ribbon of the Little Princess**
Tokyo TV • Fridays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 10 **Get a Grip, Tsuyoshi**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:00 p.m.

...AND WHAT THE RATINGS SAY THEY'RE WATCHING

The Tokyo Top Ten Anime TV Shows Based on Rating Shares Compiled by Video Research (During the Week of 2/1/93 thru 2/7/93)

- 1 **Sazae-San**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 2 **Crayon Shin-Chan**
TV Asahi • Mondays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 3 **Dragon Ball Z**
Fuji TV • Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 4 **Encyclopedia Kiteketsu**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 5 **Doraemon**
TV Asahi • Fridays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 6 **Get a Grip, Tsuyoshi**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 7 **The Poltergeist Report**
Fuji TV • Saturdays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 8 **Gobo-Chan**
Japan TV • Mondays @ 7:30 p.m.
- (TIE) **LITTLE WOMEN Nan and Jo**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 9 **Papua of the South Seas**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 10 **LOVELY SOLDIER Sailor Moon**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:00 p.m.

Highlights from the Top Japanese Anime Magazines

Between the Covers APRIL, 1993

ANIMAGE (Tokuma)

NEWS & UPDATES: "Why Does V-Gundam Start from Earth?" A Critical Essay • All About Papuwa • Encyclopedia Sailor Moon • I Can Hear the Ocean's Himuro & Kondo Debate, "What Makes a Man Ideal Today?" • More
REGULAR FEATURES: Top Ten Characters • Love Horoscope • Anime Karaoke • Animation People • Let's Go to the Movies • TV Animation World • OAV Hotline • More
SHORT STORY: "Letter from the Red Devil," by C.W. Nicol
MANGA FEATURES: *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind* by Hayao Miyazaki • *Yadamon* by Suezan • *Little Mole Mogutan* by Noriko Nagano
GIVEAWAYS: *Might Guy* Jigsaw Letter, Poster

ANIMEDIA (Gakken)

NEWS & UPDATES: "Mecha (and Non-Mecha) Anime Shows—The Next Generation" • New TV Seasons for *Sailor Moon R* and *Dragon Ball Z* • More
REGULAR FEATURES: Video Journal • Anime-Eye • TV Anime City • Media Land • Idol Pin-Up • Line Art Section: *Irresponsible Captain Tyler* • Monthly Close-Up • New TV Show Voice Actor Data File • Movie News • More
MANGA FEATURE: *Whirlwind Wild Boy Arco* by Nanase and The Arco Project
GIVEAWAYS: ANIMEDIA Comic Pocke • Variety Card Set • *NG Knight Ramune & 40* and *New Century GPX Cyber Formula 11* Poster • *Gundam* Cassette Labels • Spring Cherry Blossom Stickers

ANIME V (Gakken)

NEWS & UPDATES: *Shojo Manga* OAVs from Margaret • *Comet Warrior School Saber* • *Ah! My Goddess* • *All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl Phase 0-III* • More
REGULAR FEATURES: New OAV Navigator • Catch Up With Popular Voice Actors • "Create Your Own OAV" • The Column Battle Royal • The New Items • Anime Scramble • Video Games Section • Music and Event Info • Readers' Page
SPECIAL FEATURES: Interview with the Director of *Minky Momo* • *Ellicia* "Quiz Labyrinth"—Win a Portable CD Player, *Ellicia* Telephone Cards and More!
MANGA FEATURE: *Nadeshiko Shichimi* by Takeru Miyao
GIVEAWAYS: *Ah! My Goddess* and *KO Century, The Three Beastkeepers* Poster

NEWTTYPE (Kadokawa)

NEWS & UPDATES: Win Signed Telephone Cards, UFO Catcher Dolls and More in NT's Eight-Year Anniversary • "V-Gundam's All New Next Generation," Staff Interviews, Character Profiles • Toei Anime Fair News
REGULAR FEATURES: The Official Art of *Dragon Half* • Newtype Express • Anime Land • Express • Scramble • Newtype Forum • Fanzine Review • AV Marketplace • Modeling Section • Time Capsule Anime Snapshot Gallery • More
MANGA FEATURES: *Five Star Stories* by Mamoru Nagano • *Dark Angel* by Kia Asamiya • *Marionette Generation* by Haruhiko Mikimoto
SHORT STORY: "Equal Genesis," by Takahashi and Murase
GIVEAWAYS: Comic *Genki-R* • *Mikan's Picture Diary* Poster • Anime Cassette Labels

A Unique Perspective from our Manga and Anime Insider

FROM THE FOREST

As a manager of Manga no Mori ("Comics Forest"), the largest comic/anime merchandise specialty chain in Japan, **Takashi Oshiguchi** has been involved in the industry not only as a retailer but as a journalist for more years than he can count. In addition to his many articles, Oshiguchi writes occasionally for ANIMAGE magazine and has had his own column in the comic trade journal COMIC BOX.



VOICE ACTORS

The vocation known as "voice-acting" is possibly of a very special kind, one that only animation fans may really be familiar with. Originally, the term "voice-actor" (referring to actors dubbing the voices of foreign films and animation) was industry jargon. It was a behind-the-scenes job, one where only the voices were known, never the faces.

It was not until *Space Cruiser Yamato* that voice actors began to share the limelight. *Yamato* was the first animated television show to receive support from a group other than children. Even mainstream society took notice, dubbing the phenomenon an "animation boom."

Along with the reputation of the show itself, the popularity of charismatic characters led to heightened interest in the voice-actors themselves. Without their contributions, we wouldn't be able to even discuss the success of shows produced since *Yamato* such as *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *Urusei Yatsura*. These days, young voice-actors publicize themselves from debut on, but it wasn't always like that. In the old days, the publication of a voice-actor's photo would lead to comments such as "THAT beautiful voice was coming from a face like THIS!?" No doubt this unfortunate situation stems from a lack of basic recognition that voice-actors are, above all else, actors.

The problem is that no matter how popular a voice-actor may be, he or she must still go through the audition process. Becoming too strongly associated with a particular role may even become a handicap. That's when the decision to act "invisibly" through the power of voice alone versus the creation of an acting persona becomes a difficult one.

To make things worse, a voice-actor's pay is far lower than that of a regular actor. A few years ago, voice-actors held a demonstration to demand a raise and their pay did go up somewhat. However, since anime has a low budget to begin with, it's become rarely possible to use more than a few experienced voice-actors in any given production.

As a result, most animation features only a smattering of experienced actors amidst a sea of newcomers. When characters lack distinct personality, the production of animation becomes mundane. This tendency is especially high in most low-budget television series.

In the future, it may be only in OAVs that voice-actors can truly display their talents. In fact, there have been quite a few features created in answer to fan expectations, productions in which the individual identities of voice-actors are kept firmly in mind. These videos may well be redefining the style of Japanese animation.

OAV Release Schedule Coming Soon in Japan

Direct from Japan, this month's most accurate and up-to-date original animation video release schedule.

★ = Not yet known. ♥ = Series reviewed in this issue. X = Recommended for mature viewers only.

ON SALE	FORMAT	TITLE	ORDER NOS. (VHS/LD)	SOLD THRU	PRICE (VHS/LD)	LENGTH	PRODUCTION COMPANY
5/21	VHS/LD	Ah! My Goddess • Volume Two	JSA22102/JSLA22102 (CAV)	Kodansha (Japan System Soft)	¥5300/¥5300	0:25	A.I.C.
5/25	VHS	Legend of the Osaka Yakuza, "Let Me Fill Your Vacancy!"	ZF00309	NAC Film (Toei Video)	¥12381	Approx. 0:55	NAC
5/21	VHS/LD	Wolf Guy, "Eternal Separation" Volume Five	BES-788/BEAL-511 (CAV)	Bandai Visual	¥4800/¥4800	0:27	Visual Studio
5/21	VHS/LD	Minky Momo, "A Poem of One Bridge"	KIVA-162/KILA-48 (CLV)	King Record	¥6800/¥6800	Approx. 0:40	Ashi Production
5/21	VHS/LD	Labyrinth of the Netherworld Zeguy • Part Two	JSA22112/JSLA22112 (CLV)	KSS (Japan System Soft)	¥4800/¥4800	0:35	KSS
5/21	VHS	X Legend of the Super-God Urotsuki Doji • Books of the Future 3	★	Jupiter Film (Columbia Japan)	¥13802	0:45	Jupiter Film
5/21	VHS/LD	Takamaru • Chapter Five	BES-797/BEAL-549 (CAV)	Bandai Visual	¥4800/¥4800	0:25	J.C. Staff/ Studio Live
5/25	VHS/LD	Machine God Corps 3	PIVA-1015/PILA-1173 (CLV)	Pioneer LDC	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	Galaxy Empire
5/25	VHS/LD	Moldiver 4	PIVA-1010/PILA-1142 (CLV)	Pioneer LDC	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	A.I.C.
5/28	VHS	Singles	★	Shueisha • Victor Music Industry	¥4900	0:30	Madhouse
5/28	VHS/LD	Dragon Half 2	VIVF-10091/VILF-36 (CLV)	Victor Music Industry	¥5800/¥5800	0:30	IG Tatsunoko
MAY	VHS/LD	Stories of the Cosmic Heroes	★	Media Ring	★	★	★
SPRING	VHS/LD	♥ Epic Fantasy Elcia • Volume Three	JHE-399/★	CIC/ Victor (Japan AVC)	¥4800/★	Approx. 0:45	J.C. Staff
5/21	VHS/LD	KO Century, The Three Beastketeers II	★	Sony Music Entertainment	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	Animate Film

Northern California "Anime Week" Update

This summer, the San Francisco Bay Area will be blessed with not one but two anime and manga conventions, Anime America and Anime Expo.

Headquartered in Santa Clara, Anime America will be held from June 25-27 at the Santa Clara Westin Hotel and Convention Center. Historic downtown Oakland will be the setting for Anime Expo, scheduled to be held at the Parc Oakland Convention Center from July 2-4.

One of the best things about the two cons is that they're scheduled a mere week apart. Those wishing to mix a little business with pleasure during this Northern California "Anime Week" will have plenty of opportunities to visit local attractions such as golf and tennis courts, an amusement park, convenient shopping and various sightseeing spots thanks to the public transit available at both convention sites.

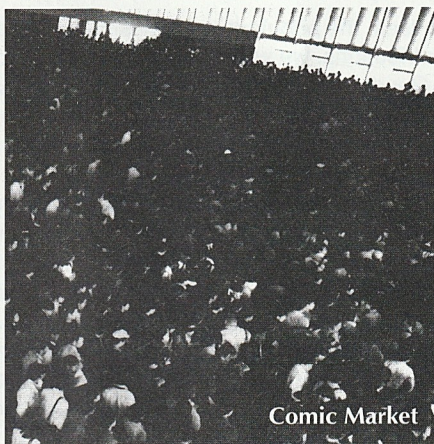
Guests of honor from Japan as well as American industry professionals will be the main attraction of both conventions. Anime America boasts writer Haruka Takachiho, with character designer Monkey Punch and artist Kenichi Sonoda competing for top billing. Also attending will be artist Johji Manabe, American artist Adam Warren, with fan guests of honor Yoshihiro Yonezawa (president of Japan's Comic Market) and Fred Patten (co-founder of the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization).

Anime Expo will feature guests of honor Scott Frazier (the first American to make inroads into the Japanese animation industry), Michitaka Kikuchi, Hiroyuki Kitazume and Makoto Kobayashi. Completing the list of Japanese guests will be the popular Haruhiko Mikimoto and modeling guests Yasushi Nirasawa and Takayuki Takeya.

Other noted guests include American anime and manga industry professionals such as L. Lois Buhalis, Ben Dunn, Tim Eldred, Helen McCarthy, Tom Orzechowski, Fred Schodt and Rick Sternbach for Anime America, with Robert DeJesus, Carl Macek, Robert Napton, Fred Schodt and Toshifumi Yoshida at Anime Expo. Representatives from Viz Comics

and ANIMERICA will be out in force at both Anime America and Expo.

This year at Anime America, members of Comic Market, Japan's largest fan publishing convention, will provide quantities of some of the most sought-after fan publications available. Comic Market staff will man a table in the dealers room and will have an ample supply of *dojinshi* or fan-press comics for sale, having solicited from all the top *dojinshi* circles in Japan. Additionally, Comic Market staff will be available to discuss convention registra-



tion. Information and registration forms will be available in English for would-be American publishers.

In order to bridge the gap between the different cultures of the world, Anime Expo will focus this year on presenting American computer animation as an equal partner to its Japanese counterpart. Panels and demonstrations by such companies as Pixar (*Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *Tin Toy*), NeXT Computers, Xaos Inc. (*Lawnmower Man*), Cambridge Animation Pacific Data Images (PDI) and other leaders of the computer animation industry are expected to be popular among fans of animation and computer animation alike.

Memberships for Anime America are \$35 until June 1, 1993; \$45 at the door and \$25 for one-day memberships. All mail-in memberships must be postmarked by **June 1, 1993**. For further information, write or call:

Anime America
298 Fourth Avenue, Suite 472
San Francisco, CA 94118
(415) 241-8823 [voice mail] /
(408) 748-9620 [fax]

Memberships for Anime Expo are \$35 until April 1, 1993 and \$40 until June 1,

1993. No mail-in memberships will be accepted between **June 15** and **July 4**. Three-day memberships will cost \$45 at the door, with single-day memberships at \$25. Memberships and all mail correspondence for Anime Expo should be sent to:

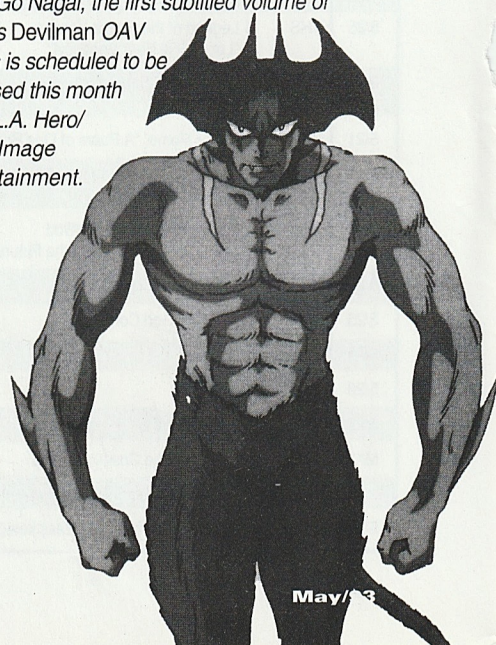
Anime Expo
c/o The Society for the Promotion of
Japanese Animation
2425-B Channing, Suite 684
Berkeley, CA 94704

When phoning in hotel reservations, please mention the name of the convention you plan to attend in order to receive the special convention rates.

Both conventions are expected to have art auctions of rare and exotic anime-related items, large dealers rooms, autograph sessions with the guests of honor, internal hotel cable programming, film programming, arcade games, art shows, various demonstrations and workshops, as well as live panel-discussions with the guests of honor. Anime America will be profiling premieres of 3-D anime short films, while Anime Expo is expected to have video theaters set up in full prologic surround-sound showing the latest subtitled and dubbed releases. Both conventions are also expected to screen the usual film premieres from Japan.

The Devil You Say! Subtitled Devilman from L.A. Hero/ D.I.E.

Based on the original comic by popular manga artist Go Nagai, the first subtitled volume of 1987's Devilman OAV series is scheduled to be released this month from L.A. Hero/Dark Image Entertainment.



"This new series is much more faithful to Nagai's manga," said Producer Robert Napton. "The occultism, the eroticism...these OAVs are much more sophisticated than the television series." The original *Devilman* television series was broadcast on TV Asahi (formerly NET) and ran from July 8, 1972 until April 7, 1973.

Devilman is the story of a young Japanese boy, Akira Fudo, who is taken over by a demon named Amon. When Akira's heart proves too pure for the hellish interloper, the tables are turned and it's Akira who is the possessor of Amon the possessed. The second volume of the *Devilman* OAV series focuses on the interaction between Devilman and Siren, the harpy-like former lover of Amon with a thirst for Devilman's blood....

The two-volume *Devilman* OAV series was first released in Japan through Kodansha and is produced by "O" Production. The first 51-minute volume was released on November 1, 1987 with a 60-minute sequel following on February 25, 1990.

L.A. Hero/Dark Image's first subtitled *Devilman* volume will retail for \$34.95 and is scheduled for a mid-May release. Look to ANIMERICA for more news as it develops.

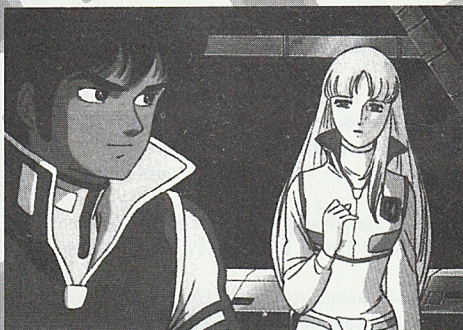
U.S. Manga Corps to Release Subtitled *Odin, Explorer Woman Ray*

Two videos—one comparatively well-known, one relatively obscure—mark this month's subtitled releases from the New York-based U.S. Manga Corps.

Powered by a revolutionary drive system and manned by a crew of seasoned professionals and impetuous youths, the space galleon *Starlight* ventures into the unknown. When the crew rescues a young girl from a wrecked spaceship, they're mystified by her familiarity with alien artifacts and her references to a place called "Odin," perhaps the birthplace of humanity itself. As the *Starlight* launches into the ocean of space, more danger lies in store than any of them might have imagined.

Photon Space Sailer Starlight Odin was originally released through Toei as a theatrical feature in Japan during 1985.

Production is by Westcape Corporation. The 139-minute video is known primarily for its association with the legendary Yoshinobu Nishizaki, creator of the *Space Cruiser Yamato* series broadcast on American television under the name "Star Blazers."



Ancient temples, sinister villains and hair-raising chase scenes are the domain of *Explorer Woman Ray*, the lesser known of U.S. Manga Corps' two subtitled releases this month. Archaeologist and black belt extraordinaire Ray Kizuki has come to a remote corner of the world to explore a legendary temple. Ray carries a mysterious, mirror-like object once owned by her father which is rumored to be the key to a lost civilization. When the mirror falls into the hands of the deadly Rig Veda, the real adventure begins!

Explorer Woman Ray is based on the original comic by Takeshi Okazaki and was originally released as two OAV volumes beginning May 26, 1989. Both volumes were released through Toshiba Video Soft with production by Animate Film/A.I.C. For U.S. Manga Corps' release, the two 30-minute OAV videos have been combined into one 60-minute

OAV release.

Both *Odin* and *Explorer Woman Ray* are scheduled for a May 5 release. *Odin* will retail for \$39.95, with *Explorer Woman Ray* retailing at \$34.95.

Outlandish New Video from D.I.E.

Dark Image Entertainment announced recently that they will release an English-dubbed version of Johji Manabe's 1986 animated love comedy *Outlanders* this summer.

"As one of Japan's top manga artists, not to mention a fan favorite here in the U.S., we felt a Manabe video release was long overdue," revealed Dark Image Entertainment representative Jenny Haniver. "His personal convention appearance this summer is sure to increase his popularity among American fans of anime and manga." Manabe is a confirmed guest of honor at this year's Anime America.

Outlanders is based on Manabe's comic of the same name. Dark Horse Comics, publisher of a previous *Outlanders* English adaptation, is currently publishing Manabe's *Caravan Kidd* series. Like *Outlanders*, the *Caravan Kidd* comic is produced by San Francisco Bay Area-based Studio Proteus and features Manabe's trademark blend of silliness and unusual organic mecha designs.

Outlanders will retail for \$24.95 and is produced by Dark Image Entertainment. The video will be distributed by Nippan (formerly Books Nippan), and is tentatively scheduled for release this July. ★

MACROSS II • CONFIRMED PLAY DATES

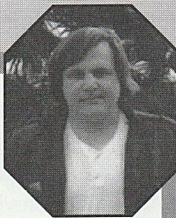
CITY	THEATER	PLAYDATE
Cleveland, OH	Cleveland Cinematheque	April 29-May 2
San Jose, CA	Towne Theater	April 30-May 6
Petaluma, CA	Washington Square Theater	April 30-May 6
Santa Cruz, CA	Sash Mill	May 6- 12
Williamsburg, VA	Williamsburg Theater	May 7- 8
San Diego, CA	Roy Theater	May 7- Open
Portland, ME	The Movies	May 12- 16
New York, NY	Angelika Film Center	May 14- 20
Arcata, CA	Minor Theater or Arcata Theater	May 14- 20
San Luis Obispo, CA	Palm Theater	May 20- Open

For additional theaters showing the *Macross II* movie, contact Tara Releasing.

Hud's View

ANIMERICA's Own Essayist on the State of Our Art

James D. Hudnall is a comic book writer known for such works as *Espers*, *Interface*, *Lex Luthor: The Unauthorized Biography*, *The Psycho* and upcoming projects such as *Twister*, *Streets*, *Sinking and Harsh Realm*. He's been a Japanese animation fan since 1981 and does rewriting work on books such as *Mai the Psychic Girl*, *Silent Möbius* and the comic adaptation of *Macross II*. In each installment of *Hud's View*, he'll explore the relationship between the connected Japanese and American comic and anime industries.



HARDWARE WARS

The giant metal figure trods across the alien desert, oblivious to the dust, sparse water and poisonous vermin which attack anything that moves. Inside the machine, a lone warrior observes the radar screens for any indication of enemy mechs.

Suddenly, a warning light flashes. Someone has locked on to his mech! A missile is headed in his direction! The warrior quickly launches a counter-missile and takes evasive action by moving behind a large rock. The counter-missile blasts the enemy projectile out of the sky, but two more enemy missiles have already been launched and are headed his way. The warrior has used his last counter-missile. He waits, hoping the rock will shield him.

This is the exciting world of "Battletech," the virtual reality game which started in the Virtual Reality Center in Chicago and has since branched out into board games, novels, television animation and a home video game.

The Virtual Reality Center is currently opening a chain of centers across the U.S. In these centers, you enter a mock mecha cockpit studded with controls and equipped with a video screen which shows you the landscape of a planet. You pilot your robot simulation across this computer-generated landscape controlled by other players in the game. The object is to fight each other for supremacy of the planet.

The experience is supposedly fantastic. Player testimonials have been glowing in their praise. Some players claim they come out sweaty and trembling, exhausted from the excitement. To add to the realism, players can communicate with each other via radios in the cockpits.

Does this game concept sound familiar to you? It should, especially if you watch a lot of Japanese animation. Giant robots have been a staple of anime for decades, and the concept has finally begun to penetrate American fantasy fiction.

"Battletech" at the forefront of this trend. The creators of "Battletech," the FASA corporation, have developed a whole universe of characters and scenarios as a backdrop for their stories and games—kind of a blend between *Mobile Suit Gundam*-type epics and author Frank Herbert's science fiction classic *Dune*. In the distant future, warring royal families, known as Houses, have control of different planetary systems. In addition to the Houses' huge armadas, feudal clans take up those territories not controlled by the Houses. It is against this backdrop that players fight for the future of the galaxy.

If you want to experience these worlds for yourself, check out the novels, games, or the Center in Chicago. To find out more information on the center nearest you, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: the FASA corporation, 1026 W. Van Buren, Chicago IL 60507.

And tell 'em Hud sent you.

VIDEO CLIPS

AMERICA'S TOP TEN

The Bestselling Animated Videos, Compiled by
Capital City Distribution, Inc. (March, 1993)

- 1 **Devil Hunter Yokko**
A.D. Vision • \$29.95
- 2 **Akira**
Streamline Pictures • \$29.95
- 3 **Venus Wars**
U.S. Manga Corps • \$39.95
- 4 **Mermaid Forest**
U.S. Manga Corps • \$34.95
- 5 **Iczer-One** • Volume 2
U.S. Renditions • \$24.95
- 6 **Lupin III: Tales of the Wolf** • Volume 1
Streamline Pictures • \$14.95
- 7 **Complete Robotech: Macross Saga** • Volume 4
Streamline Pictures • \$19.95
- 8 **Urusei Yatsura** • Volume 6
AnimEigo • \$39.95
- 9 **Appleseed**
U.S. Renditions • \$34.95
- 10 **Robotech: Macross Perfect Collection** • Volume 4
Streamline Pictures • \$19.95

CORRECTION

In our March issue we mistakenly listed U.S. Renditions' *Iczer-One*, Volume One as a Streamline Pictures release. We regret the error.

Video Release Schedule Coming Soon in America

News on the latest releases from the American subtitled and dubbed animation industry. ★ = Unlisted/Unknown. ♥ = Series reviewed in this issue.

SCHEDULED RELEASE	FORMAT(VHS/LD)	TITLE	CATALOG NOS.	SOLDTHRU	PRICE (VHS/LD)	NOTES
5/5	Subtitled VHS	♥ Explorer Woman Ray	USM 1026	U.S. Manga Corps	\$34.95	Two-volume OAV series released 1989 in Japan; combined into one 60-min. U.S.M.C. release
5/5	Subtitled VHS	♥ Odin	USM 1050	U.S. Manga Corps	\$39.95	"Director's cut" of theatrical release
5/17	Subtitled VHS	Urusei Yatsura, "Date With a Spirit" and "Terror of the Girly-Eyes Measles"	AT092-207	AnimEigo	\$39.95	Fourth AnimEigo UY OAV release
MAY	Subtitled VHS	♥ Devilman • Volume One	★	Dark Image Entertainment	\$34.95	Originally two-volume OAV series based on manga by Go Nagai, first released 1987 in Japan
MAY	Dubbed VHS	The Guyver • Volume Four	★	L.A. Hero U.S. Renditions	\$24.95	Episodes 7-8; begins dubbed release of <i>Guyver</i> , Act II
MAY	English VHS	Ultraman, "Toward the Future" • Volume Five	UAV06	L.A. Hero/ Ultra-Action Video	\$14.95	Fifth 23-min. episode of Australian TV series
MAY	Dubbed VHS	3 x 3 Eyes, "Life and Death" • Volume Three	★	Streamline Pictures	\$14.95	Four-volume series based on manga by Yuzo Takada
MAY	Subtitled VHS	Akira	★	Streamline Pictures	\$39.95	Subtitled version of the blockbuster film
MAY	Dubbed VHS	Lupin III—Tales of the Wolf, Wings of Death"	★	Streamline Pictures	\$14.95	Famous Miyazaki episode from second (1977) <i>Lupin</i> TV series

With the increasing availability of English-translated titles from U.S.-based publishers, it's easier than ever for the non-Japanese reader to enter the exciting world of manga. Whether it's an English adaptation or an American original, each issue of **Manga Close-Up** brings you the latest news and reviews from the American manga industry.



Dirty Pair Raises Virtual Hell in New Series

They're ba-a-c-k! Haruka Takachiho's sexy super-agents are the reigning tag-team champions of Japanese animation, and the American-produced comic adventures of the "Lovely Angels" are a must-buy for legions of manga and science-fantasy fans. Beginning this May, the *Dirty Pair* returns with their most spectacular adventure yet courtesy of writer/artist Adam Warren, Studio Proteus and Dark Horse Comics.

In *Sim Hell*, Kei and Yuri are given their annual "evaluation review" conducted via direct brain interface with an artificial intelligence super-computer. When Kei becomes trapped in a combat simulation feedback loop, Yuri must be "jacked" into the sim to try and rescue Kei from her cyberspace nightmare.

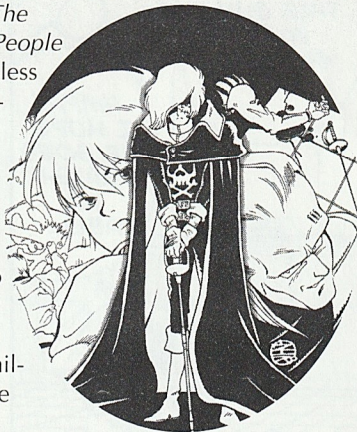
"*Sim Hell* is the greatest opportunity Adam's had yet to showcase his talents," says Dark Horse Editor John Weeks. "Because the comic is set in a kind of virtual-reality vortex, he's got the freedom to draw whatever he wants. I think *Sim Hell* is going to prove itself one of the most entertaining comics of the year."

Dirty Pair: Sim Hell is written, penciled and inked by Adam Warren. The 32-page black and white comic is scheduled to be released on May 4 and will retail for \$2.50 US/\$3.15 CAN. It will also feature a painted cover by Adam Warren.

Captain Harlock Sets Sail Once More from Malibu Comics

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the Sea of Stars.... This May will see the debut of Eternity's latest mini-series, *Captain Harlock: The Machine People*. As writer of the U.S.-produced series since its debut in 1989, Robert Gibson promises to reward both long-time readers and curious newcomers alike with one of the series' most closely guarded secrets—the origin of the lanky one-eyed sex symbol himself.

"Although he was first created by famed writer/artist Leiji Matsumoto in Japan," says Gibson, "*Captain Harlock* quickly caught on with American fans because of his rich history." Unlike the two previous *Harlock* mini-series, Gibson says that *The Machine People* will focus less on the surrounding mythos and more on introducing *Harlock* to readers who may not be familiar with the character.



The first black and white issue of *Captain Harlock: The Machine People* will retail for \$2.50 and will feature the reunion of Gibson with artist Tim Eldred (*Robotech: Invid War*). The comic will be preceded by a three-page introductory *Harlock* strip, another Gibson/Eldred collaboration to be featured in *Robotech: Return to Macross*, also shipping this month.

Bubblegum Crisis in Color from Dark Horse

"Fans of the perennially popular *Bubblegum Crisis* created by Artime's Toshimichi Suzuki will have a new reason to rejoice thanks to Dark Horse Comics. Featuring story and pencils by Adam Warren (*Dirty Pair*), the long-running OAV series will finally be released as a color comic as early as the end of this year.

"For once, instead of doing everything by himself, Adam's focus is strictly limited to writing and penciling," says Dark Horse Editor John Weeks. "After an

exhaustive search, we finally found an inker and colorist who we hope will keep both Adam and the fans happy without compromising the quality of the comic."

First released in 1987, the eight-volume *Bubblegum Crisis* OAV series and the subsequent three-volume *Crash* series have long been among the more popular animated storylines in Japan. Its release as a subtitled VHS and laser disc series by the North Carolina-based AnimEigo has served to guarantee its place in the American anime landscape.

Dark Horse promises that the comic will have "a few touches from the OAVs now and again," but that it will concentrate on presenting all-new stories written by Warren. Each issue of *Bubblegum Crisis* will feature 32 color pages and will retail for \$2.50 US/\$3.15 CAN. Look to ANIMERICA for more details as they develop.

Sanctuary, Part Two Resumes This May

Although *Sanctuary* is from the pen of the ever-popular artist Ryoichi Ikegami (Mai the Psychic Girl, Crying Freeman), Viz Comics originally considered its release experimental. An unusual 72-80 page format and an elaborate socio-political storyline nearly prevented Viz from publishing what would turn out to be one of its most prestigious manga titles. Fortunately for fans of the series, strong critical acclaim and a steadily increasing readership have encouraged Viz to release *Sanctuary, Part Two* starting this May.

"They say that art mirrors reality," says Satoru Fujii, Managing Editor of Viz Comics, "but in reading *Sanctuary*, you quickly learn that it's the other way around." Based on the continuing economic scandals that are currently making headlines around the world, *Sanctuary* is a thought-provoking, eerily prophetic look at organized crime, high-level politics and big business in contemporary Japan.

In *Sanctuary, Part Two*, the pair of ex-Khmer Rouge victims Hojo and Asami advance to the next stage in their struggle



to transform Japan from within. After being elected congressman, Asami begins his ascent to political power by recruiting equally ambitious fellow young congressmen. Meanwhile, the young Yakuza boss Hojo embarks upon his plan to dominate the entire metropolitan Tokyo underworld, while Hojo's Yakuza comrade Tokai starts his long-term invasion of Japan by the Hong Kong gangs he helps to lead.

Sanctuary, Part Two will be released as a five-issue limited series and is written by Sho Fumimura. Each monthly issue will feature 72 black and white pages at the retail price of \$4.95 US/\$6.50 CAN.

New manga, industry trends, and more!

Extreme Close-Up

"Is that a daisy, dear, or are you just glad to see me?" All kidding aside, girls' or shojo manga has got to be one of the most misunderstood subgenres in the entire manga industry. With this new column and his ongoing Ph.D. thesis (an industry first, as far as we know), manga scholar **Matt Thorn** is aiming to do for shojo what Schodt did for manga in general.

Those Eyes...

Eyes without speaking confess the secrets of the heart.

St. Jerome

Just about everyone I've ever introduced to manga has responded the same way. "Why are the eyes so big?" Almost without exception, westerners (even those of Asian ancestry) look at manga and see...well, they see white people. But when the Japanese look at their manga, they see themselves. The interesting thing is that, looked at objectively, manga characters really don't look like human beings of any stripe. It makes me wonder, then, what accounts for this difference in perception.

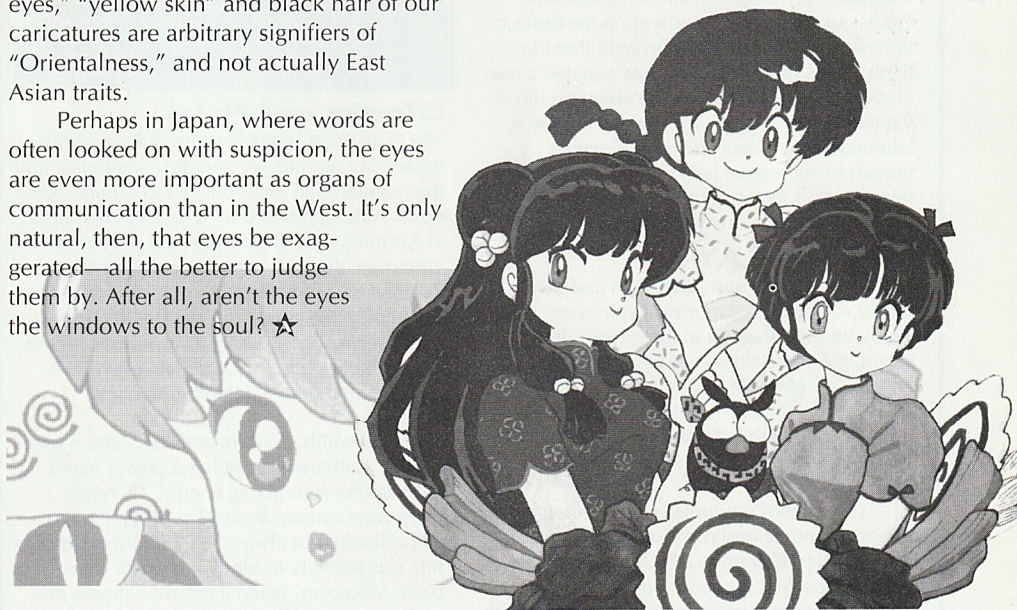
Saucer-like eyes can be found in almost every manga, exceptions like Ryoichi Ikegami (*Crying Freeman, Sanctuary*) and Sanpei Shirato (*The Legend of Kamui*) notwithstanding. Rumiko Takahashi is the most striking example. If you stop to think about her characters anatomically, you come to the disturbing conclusion that their eyeballs must occupy a good two-thirds of their cranial cavities (which may account for some of their behavior).

So why the huge eyes? Of course, the easy answer to any question of origin in manga is always "Osamu Tezuka." Just as he introduced every other major innova-

tion to manga, Tezuka was the one (as far as I know) to inflate the eyeball. No doubt this can be traced to the influence on Tezuka from early Disney films. This combined with the fact that the phenomenon really became standard practice during the American Occupation could indicate that the large eye is a symptom of a Japanese inferiority complex toward the West and Caucasians in general. I would argue, though, that any association with Caucasian ethnicity is long forgotten and no longer a factor.

Maybe the real question is, why do westerners ask this question? In the West, the dominant culture has developed a stylized way of representing "people" (meaning white people), and other ways of representing Africans, Asians, Native Americans, etc. So those of us raised with these images are surprised when other people don't represent themselves the way we represent them. But the "slanted eyes," "yellow skin" and black hair of our caricatures are arbitrary signifiers of "Orientalness," and not actually East Asian traits.

Perhaps in Japan, where words are often looked on with suspicion, the eyes are even more important as organs of communication than in the West. It's only natural, then, that eyes be exaggerated—all the better to judge them by. After all, aren't the eyes the windows to the soul? ☆



Fresh From the Forest

The writer of "From the Forest" and Manga no Mori manager **Takashi Oshiguchi** recommends the five hottest manga titles in Japan. Guaranteed ripe for reading!

1...Mysterious Midnight Journey

Written by Tetsuya Hasegawa • Published by Hobby Japan
Occult adventures of a demon-bit samurai who can now see the supernatural entities that haunt our world.

2...Reika

Written by Kaori Asano • Published by Leed Publishing
Glamorous and insouciant female bounty-hunter Reika gets into one scrape after another in this action-filled comedy.

3...Ultraman Great

Written by Kazuhiko Shimamoto • Published by Tokuma Books
Comic version of the new Ultraman TV series produced in Australia and currently airing in several U.S. markets.

4...Paradise Lady

Written by Kazumi Kakizaki • Published by Kodansha
Female pro wrestlers give it everything they've got in this look at the wrestling world's distaff corner.

5...Blue Hole

Written by Yukinobu Hoshino • Published by Kodansha
A huge hole in the ocean's floor leads to a forgotten age where dinosaurs are still king. From the author of *2001 Nights*, published in English by Viz Comics.

The Bestselling Comics, Compiled by Books Nippan, Japan (April, 1993)

Japan's Manga Top Ten

- 1 **Mr. Veterinarian** • 9
Noriko Sasaki • Hakusensha • ¥390
- 2 **3x3 Eyes** • 13
Yuzo Takada • Kodansha • ¥500
- 3 **Basara** • 7
Yumi Tamura • Shogakukan • ¥390
- 4 **Chibi Maruko-Chan** • 10
Momoko Sakura • Shueisha • ¥390
- 5 **Parasitic Beast** • 6
Hitoshi Iwaaki • Kodansha • ¥500
- 6 **Kamikaze Attacker Taku** • 7
Saki and Tokoro • Kodansha • ¥390
- 7 **Dragon Ball** • 33
Akira Toriyama • Shueisha • ¥390
- 8 **We're Agressive Runners!**
Yuki Nakaji • Hakusensha • ¥390
- 9 **The Beauty of Third Street's Hagiwara-Ya** • 1
Toko Nishi • Shinshokan • ¥490
- 10 **Jo-Jo's Bizarre Adventures** • 30
Hirohiko Araki • Shueisha • ¥390



Ever wanted to play a character from your favorite anime or manga? Video games can add a whole new dimension to enjoying anime. Each month, ANIMERICA's video game experts share tips and advice to help you achieve your highest score ever. By **Eugene Lee**



Ultraman

System

SNES

Type

Action

Manufacturer

Bandai

Price

\$49.99

Available

On Sale Now in U.S.

Notes

Above average graphics & sound

Ultraman is the defender of peace against intergalactic wrong. His ancient battle with Gudis, an evil space virus bent on the destruction of other lifeforms, has brought them to Earth. Here, the Gudis virus has mutated a host of creatures into huge monsters bent on biological supremacy. In order to combat them, Ultraman has molecularly united with a human being named Jack Shindo. Together, they travel to the ends of the planet to fight for Earth's survival against the evil Gudis.

□ BASIC PLAY

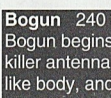
As Ultraman, you must duel with and defeat a Gudis virus-infected monster with every stage. And with nine stages and three difficulty stages, there should be ample challenge for any player. However, Shindo may transform into and remain as Ultraman for only three minutes, due to the atmospheric pollutants surrounding Earth, so there is a time limit with each stage.

Ultraman is equipped with a variety of offensive and defensive measures to combat the monsters. Offensive attacks include Ultra-Kicks, Ultra-Punches, and four powerful special weapons that require energy (but replenish with time). Defensive maneuvers range from very useful Ultra-Jumps, rolls and backflips, and Ultra-Shield, and of course that old standby, running away.

□ THE MONSTERS



Gudis 276 feet tall and 120,000 tons, Gudis is on Mars when Shindo first encounters it—it encounters Ultraman!



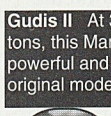
Bogun 240 feet and 34,000 tons, Bogun begins with a head bearing a killer antenna, protruding from a grub-like body, and ending with another head!



Degola At 296 feet and 74,000 tons, this huge, hairy hedgehog will viciously roll over Ultraman without warning.



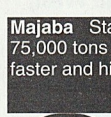
Barrangas 263 feet and 120,000 tons makes for a stunted, red dragon and a breath weapon to match.



Gudis II At 350 feet and 34,000 tons, this Mark-II is far quicker, more powerful and much deadlier than the original model.



Zebokon 350 feet and 86,000 tons of monster with the head of an anteater, head-ramming disposition of a goat, and the tenacity of a pitbull.



Majaba Standing at 260 feet and 75,000 tons heavy, this insectoid leaps faster and higher than even Ultraman!



Kodalar 206 feet and 94,000 tons. Emits laser from its mouth; its resemblance and origins, compared to another uptight, Japanese iguana-saurus, is uncanny.



Kilazee At 400 feet and 82,000 tons, this dragon-like creature is quick, powerful, breathes fire and has another laser beam weapon. Kilazee is truly the "mother of all monsters"!

□ Tactics and Notes

The "Ultraman" game cart itself disappointingly lacks an opening explanatory sequence, and the manual itself gives only a brief, minor synopsis. Although based on a recent, international Australian-Japanese television production of *Ultraman*, the lack of any believable, interactive plot device makes the game less interesting to play. There are no intermediary transitional scenes between fights than even hint of a storyline, except for Ultraman growing to full-size, and then flying off to the next encounter.

The combat system at every stage is uninspiring. Each combatant has a power meter, with attacks subtracting energy. There are three ways to handle attacks—dodging, the Ultra-Shield (not always reliable), or taking the hit. This inability to block is a major drawback. Moreover, when a monster attacks and makes contact, Ultraman is always knocked from his feet, sometimes inviting a monster to charge in and score a cheap shot; Ultraman, on the other hand, cannot knock any monsters down at all. Each monster has in its arsenal some form of long-range beam/breath weapon usable at will without any time limit, while the energy for Ultraman's special weapons requires 10-40 seconds of charging time. Occasionally, the game will not acknowledge signals from the controller pad, at worst incurring a 2-5 second beating.

There are a few redeeming qualities of this cart. The animation of Ultraman and the monsters is smooth without flicker, and with each difficulty setting comes a different ending sequence. Overall, the graphics and sound are above average, but players expecting a complex plot and combat verisimilitude are likely to be disappointed. Recommended as a good candidate for rental.

Fast-Forward Japan

New and Upcoming Video Game Releases

Pioneer Laser Active

System
Sega Mega Drive
/ NEC PC Engine

Type
Interactive
Game System

Manufacturer
Pioneer

Price
¥90,000 for base;
¥60,000 for each game

Available
June

Notes
First LD-based home
game system

From the laser disc innovator Pioneer comes "Laser Active," a multi-purpose laser disc player which, when connected to a game unit, allows the user to play a LD-based game. Laser Active will be released in Japan and the U.S. simultaneously and will feature a Mega-Drive (Sega Genesis) unit and a PC Engine (Turbo Grafx) unit, as well as karaoke capability. The LD base will allow games to have real video backgrounds, more music and longer programs than CD-based games.

Wizardry I & II

System
PC Engine

Type
RPG

Manufacturer
Naguzat

Price
No Price Set

Available
No Date Set

Notes
Remake of the
1991 computer-based RPG

It's been twelve years since Sir Tech and Robert Woodhead (now president of AnimEigo) released the original "Wizardry." Now, after years of success in Japan encompassing several sequels and ports to home games systems as well as an OAV release, a newly revamped and enhanced "Wizardry I & II" will be re-released on one CD for the PC Engine. Some of the enhancements include newly drawn monsters by the artist of the *Record of Lodoss War* comic currently running in *Marukatsu PC Engine Magazine*, a newly reworked map, improved dungeon graphics and a user-friendly and informative interface.

Devastator

System
Sega Mega CD System

Type
Action

Manufacturer
Sega Mega-CD System
Japan Telenet and Wolf Team

Price
No Price Set

Available
No Date Set

Notes
Part of a multimedia onslaught
(books, OAVs, etc.)

In the ever-growing arena of media mixing, an action game based on the OAV of the same name will soon be available through Japan Telenet and Wolf Team. In the game the player controls the main characters of the OAV who take control of the robot, Versus. The game is a side-scrolling shooting game with over 20 minutes of visual sequences taken from the OAV in between the various stages.

Aim for the Top! Gunbuster, Volume Two

System
PC Engine

Type
Adventure game
/ "digital comic"

Manufacturer
Riverhill Soft

Price
¥7200

Available
On Sale Now

Notes
Great animated sequences

This CD-ROM based adventure game/"digital comic" for the PC Engine is based on the third and fourth episodes of the OAV series, but the story has been changed slightly to allow the player to make key decisions and the game includes multiple endings. Newly recorded lines by the original voice actors and a collection of lines never used in the actual game add an extra dimension to the game, while an amusing "radio drama" feature allows players to interact with characters in a whole new way.

—Toshitumi Yoshida

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Santa Cruz, California 95060

MAY 7 - 8
Williamsburg Theater
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Williamsburg, Virginia 33105

MAY 7 - ?
Rey Theater
1325 1/2 Wisconsin Ave., Northwest
Washington D.C. 20007

MAY 13 - 16
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Portland, Maine 04101

MAY 14 - 20
Minor Theater
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Arcata, California 95521

MAY 14 - ?
Angelika Film Center
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New York, New York 10012

MAY 28 - ?
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Ken Theater
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APRIL 16 - 29
Dream Theater
301 Prescott Ave.
Monterey, California 93940

MAY 30 - JUNE 2
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Olympia, Washington 98501

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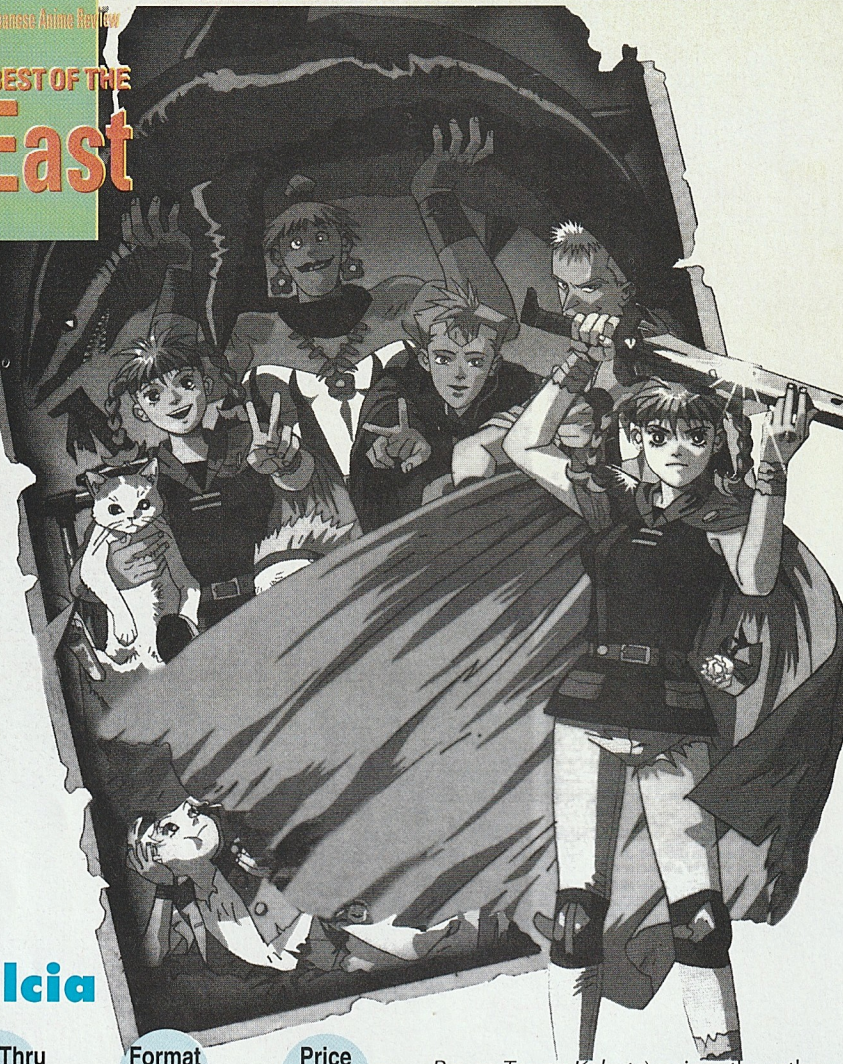
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More than just entertainment, anime is one of Japan's most valuable (and enjoyable) forms of cross-cultural communication. In this section, ANIMERICA asks Japanese and U.S. industry professionals to evaluate the latest in this diverting and enriching art form. By Yoshitaka Ishigami

Japanese Anime Review BEST OF THE East



Elcia

Sold Thru

CIC Victor

Format

VHS/LD

Price

¥4800/¥6900
(w/tax)

Length

45 min.

Release Date

On Sale Now

Notes

Great Voice Cast

A story of oceanic adventure woven together with the technology of a bygone civilization, *The Tale of a Narrative Fantasy—Elcia* is an outstanding example of an original approach to the often tired fantasy genre.

Elcia's charm lies in its easily distinguishable characters and in its colorful, veteran voice cast. As "Eira," leader of the pirates from Eijia Island, Kazuko Ikura ("Kaori," *City Hunter*) shines in the role of the spirited girl. Trying a villain for the first time is Ai Orikasa ("Ryoko," *No Need for Tenchi! Demon Emperor Ryō*), who plays "Christel," queen of the industrial city of Megalonia. Christel's subordinate officer "Felkis" is played by the seasoned Kaneto Shiozawa ("D," *Vampire Hunter D*), while Yasunori Matsumoto ("Kabuto,"

Raven Tengu Kabuto) voices the rather docile role of "Elri," the prince of Eijia imprisoned in Megalonia. This role is an abrupt departure from the action hero-type parts Matsumoto usually plays. Rounding out the cast is Aya Hisakawa ("Sailor Mercury," *Lovely Soldier Sailor Moon*) as the mystical fairy-child "Maird."

Elcia benefits from a skillful production staff as well. Direction is by the seasoned Tsuguyasu Furukawa (*Magical Emi, Zillion*), with Yasuomi Umezu handling character design and animation direction. Umezu, who charmed fans with his style and talent in the opening to *Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam*, is also known for his work on projects such as *Megazone 23, Part Two* and *Robot Carnival*. Mecha designs are by Yasuharu Morimoto (*Silent Möbius*), with art direction by Hiroaki Sato and music by Tatsumi Yano.

Beautiful, charming animation, highly detailed artwork, first-rate direction and great voice-acting will all live up to your best expectations. *Elcia* is sure to make you look forward to the sequel.

Oz

Sold Thru

Victor Music Industry

Format

VHS/LD

Price

¥6800/¥9800
(w/tax)

Length

Two VHS vols.
@ 35 and 30 min.;
one LD @ 70 min.

Release Date

On Sale Now

Notes

Allegorical *shōjo*
tribute to Baum's series

In Japan, works by women artists for women readers—girls' or *shōjo* manga—is a thriving genre. *Shōjo* manga has a unique depth that is hard to find elsewhere and within it, science fiction is one of its most popular subgenres these days.

It's said that all *shōjo* manga artists dream of drawing a science fiction story. Natsumi Itsuki's *Oz* is one such *shōjo* manga that's actually been animated, and no one can deny that its complex world view and realism is nothing less than sci-fi at its best.

In the year 2021, thirty-one years after a nuclear war, 60% of humanity is dead. The United States of America have split up into six countries. Spreading deserts have led to continual military conflict, and there are constant food and energy shortages. Into this despair is born a legend, that somewhere on Earth there is a city where pre-war technology can be found, where no hunger or strife exists. This mythical city is called "Oz."

In reality, *Oz* is a fearsome military base ruled by the mad scientist Leon Epstein (Yuji Mitsuya, "Dr. Tofu" in *Ranma 1/2*). Wandering



throughout the story in search of the city is the technical genius Felicia Epstein (Yuko Minaguchi, "Yawara" in *Yawara!*), the mercenary Muto (Yasunori Matsumoto, see above) and the android 1019 (Toshiko Fujita, "Rally Cheyenne," *Silent Möbius*).

Meticulous and painstaking work went into the pre-production of this approximately 30-minute video (see Hakusensha's *Oz Manual* for more details). Because director Katsuhisa Yamada (*Devil Hunter Yoko*) had fallen in love with the original manga, he and Itsuki were in constant communication. Among the many things they discussed was the story's ending, which at that time had not been written.

Oz is also blessed with a talented production staff which includes Yoichiro Yoshikawa, whose tension-setting music immediately draws viewers into the world of *Oz*. Although the latter half of the story develops all too soon (a common problem in animating a vast, original storyline), Itsuki has clearly made authoritative decisions in condensing the story for animation, presumably to allow the interested reader to enjoy the original manga. *Oz* is a grand OAV well worth your attention.

Green Legend Ran

Sold Thru
Pioneer LDC

Format
VHS/LD

Price
¥10094/¥8034
(w/tax)

Length
45 min.

Release Date
On Sale Now

Notes
Softer character
and mecha designs
reminiscent of Miyazaki

Although original animation has found its niche and a respectable number of works are released each year, videos with similar themes often make it all the more difficult for studios to develop a fresh approach. *Green Legend Ran* goes right back to re-examine the basics of entertainment and action-adventure in animation.

The concept for *Ran* originated with a single proposal paper by celebrated script writer Yu Yamamoto (*Mobile Suit Gundam*, *Galactic Whirlwind Buraiger*), who submitted his proposal in April of 1991. The first OAV episode is mostly a prologue to the story, depicting main character "Ran" (Hidehiro Kikuchi, "Jojo" in *Panzer World Galiant*), the town Ran lives in, and the appearance and departure of the girl "Aira" (Mitsuki Yayoi,



"Riikuni,"
Wings of Oneamis).

Animation director Yoshimitsu Ohashi has utilized the curvilinear lines to create fluid animation in his character and mecha designs, avoiding the harder, more complex structures found in other schools of mecha design. With a design philosophy perhaps best represented by the works of Hayao Miyazaki, Ohashi succeeds in expressing a particularly delicate sense of movement. In fact, the sharp-eyed viewer may notice that this video bears certain similarities to Miyazaki's *Future Boy Conan*. Throughout the first episode, entire

sections can be found that seem to be very conscious of it.

Ran harbors a few technical shortcomings, such as some conflicting colors and unevenly painted cels, but the staff's resolve to re-examine the basics of animation come through very well. Music is by Yoichiro Yoshikawa (see above), who's developing a fine reputation for himself through his several animation projects. *Ran* is well worth seeing as a display of today's Japanese animation standard. It would not surprise me at all if it became a 1992 OAV masterpiece. ★



CD Review

The Compact View

In Japan, animation soundtracks are every bit as legitimate as the latest from Ryuichi Sakamoto. Even the most humble of anime features are certain to be accompanied by an "official" soundtrack. Each issue in **The Compact View**, music enthusiast **Chris Keller** helps you to understand the often confusing world of CDs by reviewing both Japanese and domestic releases.



The Crimson Pig

Released Thru
Animage Records
Length
49:02 min.

Order No.
TKCA-30596
Price
¥3000 (w/tax)

One of the nicest things about the ever-popular Hayao Miyazaki's animated feature films is the consistently great score by his longtime collaborator, celebrated composer Jo Hisaishi. Hisaishi's excellent score to *The Crimson Pig* is no exception to this rule.

The music explores the kind of recognizable European sounds found in Miyazaki's previous film *Kiki's Delivery Service*, only with a more specific focus. Because the film takes place in the Mediterranean, the score is filled with phrases reminiscent of Italian folk music featuring a variety of woodwinds and mandolins.

Taken in context with the previous scores for *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*, *Castle in the Sky*, *Laputa*, *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Kiki's Delivery Service* (all works of Hisaishi), the score for *Crimson Pig* comes full-circle musically. The orchestration incorporates elements of all of Hisaishi's scores for Miyazaki and yet still synthesizes a unique work of music.

As always with a Hisaishi score, there is at least one unforgettable piece of music that perfectly captures the whole emotional tone of the film. In this case it is the track "Porco e Bella," a melancholy melody line that is tragic and yet deeply romantic at the same time. With a film filled with action, whimsy and tragedy, Hisaishi's score captures all the essential emotional moments with music that is as entertaining as the film it comes from.

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SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS, MACROSS II
2 volumes, two 30 min episodes per volume. Eighty years have passed since the Zentraedi war. The descendants of *Macross* are threatened by new alien aggressors. Once again the *SDF-01 Macross* must arise to defend humanity. Designs by series co-creator Haruhiko Mikimoto.
Contains profanity.

SUPER DIMENSION CENTURY, ORGUSS

2 volumes, three 30 min episodes on Vol. 1; two 30 min episodes on Vol. 2. Kei Katsuragi of the Freedom Space Corps is thrown through time into a strange future world. He must battle hostile forces using his transformable fighter, *Orguss*. From the creators of *Macross*.
Contains profanity, violence, slight nudity.



BIO-BOOSTER ARMOR, GUYVER

2 volumes, two 30 min episodes per volume. Sho Fukamachi accidentally fuses with the alien armor *Guyver*. Now he must battle corporate evil and biomorphic Zoanoids in order to survive! Based on the comic by Yoshiaki Takaya.
Contains violence.

FIGHT! ICZER-ONE
2 volumes, two 30 min episodes on Vol. 1 (Acts 1 & 2); one 45 min episode on Vol. 2 (Act 3). Nagisa Kano is an ordinary Japanese school girl. Suddenly, she is thrust into the middle of an invasion by the alien C'thuwulf. To survive she must become the partner of Earth's defender, *Iczer-One*! Created by Toshihiro Hirano (*Dangaio*, *Megazone 23*) Dub produced by U.S. Renditions.
Contains nudity & profanity.



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GUNBUSTER-Aim for the Top!

3 volumes, two 30 minute episodes per tape. Noriko Takaya is a young girl in the Earth Space Force. She is chosen to co-pilot the *Gunbuster*, the ultimate fighting machine. Noriko must defend Earth from aliens!
Contains nudity.



APPLESEED ova feature 70 minutes. Based on Masamune Shirow's cyberpunk comic series. SWAT team members Deunan and Briareos battle bioroid terrorists in the post-apocalyptic world of Olympus. **Contains violence.**

BLACK MAGIC M-66 ova feature 60 minutes. Masamune Shirow's story of a military android who wants to terminate a young girl. Creator Shirow directed this acclaimed animation feature. **Contains nudity and violence.**



DANGAIO Parts 1, 2, & 3

3 volumes, one episode per tape, 45 min each. Four young psychics must battle the Bunker space pirates. They are aided by their psionically powered mecha, *Dangaio*! Designs by Shoji Kawamori of *Macross*.
Contains profanity.

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Subtitled and Dubbed Anime Review

BEST OF THE

West

Aim For The Top! Gunbuster

Sold Thru U.S. Renditions	Format Subtitled VHS	Price \$34.95	Length Six episodes at 55-60 min. each
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Release Date On Sale Now	Translation Iyadomi & Grant, Yoshida & Ledoux	Notes Three-Volume Series
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Aim for the Top! Gunbuster can truly be called a work of science fiction in a heroic space opera style, with space opera in no way meant as a pejorative. Toshio Okada has given us a story filled with amazing concepts of future science as well as human conflict that succeeds on many levels primarily because this story, as well as the animation style, evolves over time. The plot holds our interest, the characters are continually engaging; we are entertained and possibly even educated in the process. A good story, science fiction or otherwise, should aspire to nothing less.

The animation quality is first-rate, as one would expect from Gainax, the producers of *The Wings of Oneami*, *Royal Space Force*. Haruhiko Mikimoto's original character designs age and evolve from the first episode on, some more than others due to light-speed time-dilation effects.

The mecha design and effects animation are likewise top-notch. From the RX trainer robots, spaceships, and weapons, to the giant Gunbuster itself, the designs are a wonderful mix of classic and current anime hardware motifs, with a sprinkling of early Soviet space inventions. The graphic displays are complex and vital, and will satisfy even the pickiest techno-junkie. The backgrounds and general attention to detail are laudable, especially in the black-and-white sixth and final episode. In all honesty, most everything about episode six is phenomenal. The decision to heighten the drama by going to black and white and the letterbox format was a stroke of cinematic genius. The pacing and composition could translate directly to live-action.

The Gunbuster, the pinnacle of mobile weaponry in this scenario, rapidly

exhausts superlatives. Massive nuclear rocket power, energy discharge weapons, and ship-crushing strength make it one of the most extraordinary machines in anime. The sequences of the twin Buster Machine ships joining and the composite entity firing its weapons will be hard to top.

Backing up the episodes are short science lessons on the nature of ether fields, black hole physics and space warps, star-bows and components of the alien menace. All are carefully crafted with real and imaginary science and deliberately blur the dividing line. They are hosted by superdeformed versions of our heroes, with Ota ("Coach!") springing up to yell at Noriko about her studies.

The music is remarkable in its quality of orchestration and variety. The pieces range across fun and lively, heroic, melancholy and suspenseful. A number of recognizable compositions are present, including Handel's *Messiah*, the second movement (*Largo*) from Dvorak's *Symphony No. 9* in E Minor (from his *New World* symphony). Other melodies exist as sound-alike avatars, notably selections from *Chariots of Fire*, *The Day of the Dolphin*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and (of course), *The Planets* by Holst. All are welcome, even when one knows the original

sources. In this U.S. Renditions tape, the hi-fi sound is clear and comes across in both front and rear channels. A good stereo system connected to the VCR will profoundly change the way you watch this series.

The video quality of the tape is quite good with few dropouts, and is subtitled. The translations read smoothly, even the mind-numbing explanations of ether and warp physics, provided in part by your editor (and no, she didn't have to twist my arm to review this title; in the slightly incestuous U.S. anime industry, coincidences are bound to happen). I prefer subtitled anime to dubs, unless those dubs are of sufficient quality to sound natural. U.S. Renditions' subtitling, which underwent minor changes after the first volume, is clear and readable, and uses colors for different modes, such as yellow for dialogue, white for unspoken thoughts, and green for song lyrics. As with most good subtitles, the type has a dark outline. Superimposed Japanese location names have been covered by a darker tint and their English translation, less jarring than an opaque black. U.S. Renditions has met the typographical challenges posed by *Gunbuster* satisfactorily, making this an enjoyable set of tapes that preserve the qualities of the voices and music.

Because of Gainax, Bandai, and U.S. Renditions, English-speaking audiences can indulge in quality anime with a fantastic story and convincing characters. And a hopeful future to boot. ★



Rick Sternbach is best known for his work as senior illustrator/technical consultant on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* as well as the *STTNG* spin-off *Deep Space Nine*. He has twice been honored with science fiction's prestigious Hugo Award for Best Artist, and won an Emmy as an assistant art director on the PBS series *Cosmos*. His list of favorite anime goes at least as long as his art credits, and when he's not wheeling *STTNG*'s writers into including anime jokes in the scripts, he studies Japanese with his young son Josh through his abundant anime laser disc collection.

Letters from Our Readers

Animessages

(in the Electronic Age)

Where else but ANIMERICA can you find anime reviews, the hottest news, exclusive manga features and the very latest interviews in each monthly issue? And now, to make it even better, you can write us via e-mail.

That's right! We've established an account on Internet, the global communications network. If you've got e-mail access, leave a message for us at:

viz@netcom.com

Comments or criticism, we're all set to hear from you electronically. For those of you without e-mail access, don't worry—you can still reach us the conventional way. So send in those letters and let's make this an anime and manga forum we can all be proud of!

Dear ANIMERICA,

I wanted to write and say, after only one issue, I really like the mag! I backordered the premiere issue from Bud Plant in January and received it earlier this month. I mainly wanted it for the Mikimoto stuff, but I was impressed with every article.

In Tucson, we anime/manga fans are starved for titles, products and info, and your publication will really help me out as I try to expand my tiny anime collection. I am a very avid fan of all Haruhiko Mikimoto's work, especially *Macross*, *Southern Cross* and *Mospeada* (AKA *Robotech*). I've gone for years with nothing but TV reruns and a few action-figures in my collection. After acquiring several *Robotech* pen pals last year, I have expanded (with their help) my knowledge of the world of anime and manga.

Anyway, I am a major fan and I'm just getting started! I think ANIMERICA is a *terrific* magazine and I hope to enjoy every issue. You do a great service.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Applegate
Tucson, AZ

Thanks for the kind words, Kimberly. We chose your letter to start off with because (1) you've obviously got great taste; and (2) you're female. Sexist, you say? You bet. We want to do everything we possibly can to encourage our few precious female readers, and if that means showing a little favoritism now and then, move over boys! ANIMESSAGES is an equal-opportunity lettercol!

Dear ANIMERICA,

Ever since Questor International introduced *Voltron*, *Mazinger Z*, *Daimos* and *Getter Robo* in the late '70s to American television, I've been hooked permanently on Japanese animation. Later, when *Battle of the Planets* was aired, I just couldn't keep my eyes off of the TV. Leiji Matsumoto's *Starzinger* and the various *Space Cruiser Yamato* movies increased my craving for

anime all the more. Who hasn't already mentioned the superior artwork and the complex plots that are at par with any soap opera?

But that isn't the reason why I wrote. The one animation show that has left an unforgettable imprint in my adolescent mind during the mid '80s was Hasbro's *Transformers*. The concept of living machines fighting a battle between two races and limited fuel resources reflected certain events that have occurred in the past. Could your magazine possibly give a concise rundown on the Japanese version of *Transformers*? Many questions have been on my mind about the series, and maybe your magazine can answer them:

- Who did the mecha designs for the first generation? Second? Third?
- What were the Japanese names of the various characters I've come to know? ("Optimus Prime," "Megatron," etc.)
- Did the show follow a common plot with the American version?
- Latest developments
- Are there any plans to have the Japanese episodes translated by, let's say, U.S. Renditions or U.S. Manga Corps?

Thanks for hearing me out, ANIMERICA. Your concept is really good! Keep it up and maybe you'll be able to add another manga story—maybe even two! The ones you have now are simply awesome.

Paul I. Veloso
Pasay City, Philippines

Our Transformers expert is on Galvatron at the moment, Paul, but we'll do the best we can. As far as we know, Transformers is one of those unusual series which started in Japan, came to America, and then went back to Japan where it enjoyed even greater success. We don't have any plans to add any more manga—the two we already have keep our hands full!—but we do hope to expand our page count before too long.

Dear ANIMERICA Staff,

I recently picked up a copy of your magazine and just wanted to tell you that it was great. In my opinion, this magazine is something that is very much needed in the U.S., as it is difficult to find information on manga and anime, both of which I am quite fond of.

With ANIMERICA, I can find out about things before they come out and decide on the investment before I leap blindly into a possibly lame plot. (Actually, I don't think I've picked up a manga title I didn't like, but hey, you never know.)

I only started collecting manga about a year ago, but I have a collection of which I'm fairly proud. Unfortunately, I don't have any anime yet because for some reason it is almost impossible to find things like that around where I live. In fact, I've only found one title, Masamune Shirow's *Dominion*, and I didn't have the hundred bucks to buy a four-tape set. This leads me to another important part of your magazine, that being the ads. Ads, such as the one on the inside of the back cover, help people like me to be able to get videos that would otherwise remain unknown.

Another super-swell part of your magazine are the manga features. The *AD Police* segment was very cool, and Rumiko Takahashi is one of my two favorite artists (along with Shirow). I

eagerly await the next issue with its interviews, reviews, another *AD Police* segment, another Takahashi story (JOY!), and whatever else you may have in store. I regret to say that I haven't the money to afford a subscription, but will buy your wonderful magazine in the nearest comic shop, assuming they continue receiving it, until I've got the dough. Thanks for the great mag and keep up the excellent work.

Your joyous and little-informed customer,

Patrick Houghton
Greenfield, MA

We're glad you can appreciate the ads, Patrick. (We're kind of fond of them ourselves.) Many of our readers are college students, and we realize that money can be a problem in the pursuit of anime loot. That's why we've decided to extend a special offer—new subscribers get 25% off the newsstand price! Just look for the little card included in every issue.

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much! Finally a magazine that provides update material on *all* Japanese and American anime. There was a day when I used to hope that I would be able to keep up with all the numerous titles without having to ask my friends, who at that time where on holidays in Hong Kong via Japan. They were my basic source of information and literature (which was mostly in Japanese). Now there is ANIMERICA!

By the way, this is the first time I have ever written to a magazine before. I would have figured I'd write to DC, or Marvel Comics first, but I guess that honor goes to you guys. Before I finish off, I would like to ask a couple of questions, if I may:

1. On page 37 of the premiere issue, Chris Keller reviews the *Superdimensional Fortress Macross* BGM Collection. What I would like to know is, how can I get a copy of it?
2. On your last page, you have a U.S. Renditions ad for English-dubbed videos of *Macross II* and *Orguss*, among others. I would like to order a few, but I am kind of skeptical because a friend of mine ordered something through the mail before, and he received nothing. So how dependable is U.S. Renditions?

Thank you again for your excellent magazine. I hope to see you guys on the shelves for many years to come.

Yours truly,

Chris Lam
Barnaby, British Columbia
Canada

To order the Superdimensional Fortress Macross BGM Collection, we suggest you contact the always-reliable Nikaku AniMart at (408) 971-2822. About U.S. Renditions...Having worked extensively with USR over the past few years, we can assure you that they are indeed quite reputable. (Besides, they won't dare lose your order if you tell them we sent you!)

Dear Editor,

You guys have gotta help me! Ever since I was 10 years old, I've been watching anime shows such as *Star Blazers*, *Battle of the Planets*, etc. I've been drawing in the manga genre for as long as I can remember. Since I found out about an animation club here at College Station and watched my first *Bubblegum Crisis*, I've been totally inspired to do animation for a living.

I know the students in Japan draw for long hours every day—I spent my last school break drawing 5-9 hours a day! Maybe I'm not as good as a lot of the fans around here, but I'm sure I can improve with proper instruction. I just need a chance.

I've tried several other anime magazines and related organizations but none of them will reply to my requests. Please...surely you guys know something about animation schools!

Any information you could give me would be invaluable. Maybe I'll even be featured in your magazine someday. If not, who cares? I'm

in it for me, not for money or fame. Thank you for your time.

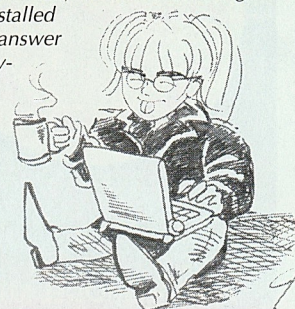
Sincerely,

Chris Liao
College Station, TX

It's a good thing you've got your priorities straight, Chris. So long as you're doing what you love, nothing else matters. We're sorry we can't help you more; you might want to try contacting ANIMERICA MAGAZINE regarding information on animation schools with instruction in English (sure, we could help you out with some Japanese schools, but then you'd have to move to Japan. Just think how expensive it would be for us to send you ANIMERICA via airmail every month!).

All things considered, ANIMERICA's turning out better than any of us hoped (and we've been hoping quite a lot!). Keep sending in your letters,

especially you female readers. Now that I've got my new PowerBook 165c, all I have to do is get that fax modem installed and I'll be able to answer your letters wherever I go. As always, if you'd like your full address printed with your letter, let us know. See you in thirty.
—Trish



ANIMERICA welcomes letters from its readers. Address correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, c/o Viz Comics, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107. We are unable to answer letters individually. Concise, typed letters have the best chance of being published. We reserve the right to edit for space or clarity.

The Animessages Poll

You know what they say...practice makes perfect. And we want ANIMERICA to be as perfect as we—and you, our readers—can make it. Please take a moment to answer this month's questionnaire, letting us know which features, columns and departments you liked (or didn't like). A random drawing will award five lucky readers with a choice selection of Viz Comics.

In the meantime, keep sending in your top three (not five) favorite anime shows, characters and manga. We'll print the results in a following issue. Send your completed questionnaires and your "anime/manga favorites" polls by **June 30, 1993** to:

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ANIMERICA May '93

Feature Article: "Bubble, Bubble, Genom Means Trouble"

The ANIMERICA Interview: Toshimichi Suzuki

"Voices of Bubblegum Pop," A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Popular Voice Actors

Anime Q & A: "AnimEigo + Bubblegum Crisis = It's Easy as ABC"

"Tiny Bubbles," Micro-Synopses of Staff Information on the Complete BGC Series

Manga Feature: *AD Police* by Tony Takezaki

Manga Feature: *Mermaid Forest* by Rumiko Takahashi

Dateline: Japan

Dateline: America

Manga Close-Up

Extreme Close-Up

Best of the West

Best of the East

The Compact View

From the Editor

Between the Covers

TV Top Ten, Japan

From the Forest

Coming Soon in Japan

Video Clips: Japan

Hud's View

Video Clips: America

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In the Next Issue of ANIMERICA...!

We've been written up everywhere from New York's "alternative" newspaper THE VILLAGE VOICE to MADEMOISELLE magazine. We're ANIMERICA, America's first (and only) anime and manga monthly. Be sure not to miss a single one of these exciting features (and in COLOR, too)!

Anime Feature

Silent Möbius

Beginning without fanfare in May 1988, Kia Asamiya's **Silent Möbius** has gone on to become one of the most talked-about anime and manga multimedia phenomena of the '90s. Special correspondent **Takashi Oshiguchi** talks to the man who started it all, **Gunhed** artist **Kia Asamiya** in **The ANIMERICA Interview**; **Toshifumi Yoshida** looks at the bestselling series in **"The Twists and Turns of Silent Möbius"**; **Anime Q&A** talks to Viz Comics' Managing Editor **Satoru Fujii** on the bestselling manga series; plus **"The Girls of Silent Möbius,"** a full-color pictorial you'll want to tell your friends about!

Manga Features

The Fourth Chilling Installment in the Horror Masterpiece

MERMAID FOREST

Conclusion of the first enthralling chapter, "A Mermaid Never Smiles." Partake of the mermaid's flesh, the legend says, and you'll live forever. But what about the ones you love? Yuta, the boy with a taste for immortality, discovers that living forever might not be so bad after all. Mermaid Forest is a uniquely macabre tale from manga wunderkind **Rumiko Takahashi** and is exclusive to ANIMERICA

Fifth Installment in the Dark World of Bubblegum Crisis

AD Police

The machine messiah No. 28 continues his "great enterprise" while No. 55 ponders, Is the world truly ready for the next phase in evolution? Based on the popular OAV series of the same name created by **Toshimichi Suzuki**, the father of Bubblegum Crisis. Another ANIMERICA exclusive, from the pen of **Tony Takezaki**

PLUS...

The Latest News from Japan and America
Reviews of the Hottest Subtitled and Dubbed Anime Titles
New Developments in the World of Manga
Results of our Readers' Poll and...
Much, Much More!



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First there was the girl who was hotter than hell.

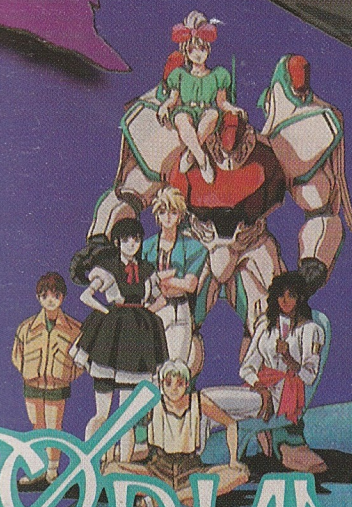
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